

WARFARE IN MEDIEVAL BRABANT, 1356-1406

Sergio Boffa

Warfare in History

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Warfare in History

**WARFARE IN MEDIEVAL BRABANT
1356–1406**

Warfare in History
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WARFARE IN MEDIEVAL BRABANT
1356–1406

Sergio Boffa

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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General Editor's Preface

An English-speaking audience might be considered well aware of military activities in the Low Countries in the fourteenth century. After all, this was the region where Edward III conducted most of his campaigns and where English political and economic concerns were paramount. Although the Duchy of Brabant lay further to the north and west than Flanders, so crucial to England's wool trade, it had other important connections with the kingdom, and military ones at that: Brabançon mercenaries had served Henry II, in the twelfth century, although their fame was comparatively short-lived, and in the fourteenth century this role was reciprocated by men-at-arms and archers drawn from England to serve the duchy's rulers and defend its towns.

Yet there has been no detailed study of the military organization of a territorial unit of this size before, in any language. It is therefore most fortunate that Serge Boffa has made Brabant his focus (as evidenced already by a series of articles on the subject) and now is able to draw his conclusions from a study of the duchy over half a century and more, extending the seminal work of H. J. Hewitt, and his co-linguists J. F. Verbruggen and Claude Gaier. He begins with an overview of military activity during the reigns of Wenceslas and Joan. What is particularly useful about this approach is that enables Boffa to examine many different levels of warfare, ranging from interstate conflict to much lower-level disputes including urban rebellions, ducal campaigns against recalcitrant vassals and internecine conflicts and feuds. This is followed by an overview of how war was conducted in the period, in respect of broader strategy (together with observations on *chevauchée*, the most common form of operations), fortress and siege warfare, guerrilla activities and pitched battles. It is set against the background of often low-level and transitory warfare characterised as *guerre guerroyante*, which entitled war to be represented as ever-present as death, plague and famine, in the popular image of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

The latter parts of the book are concerned with structure. Part Two deals with the power and involvement in military affairs of the rulers: initially Wenceslas, but then Joan, with all the problems implied by leadership by an elderly woman. (Joan certainly impressed the chronicler Dnyter, though, who accords her this accolade: 'As a woman of great courage, after the manner of a virtuous man, she knew her own mind'.) The section on the constraints placed upon ducal authority is particularly insightful and a welcome corrective to any lingering ideas of a 'feudal pyramid' in territorial principalities. This might create the requirement for the ruler to wage 'private' rather than 'common' war in pursuit of political aims or military necessities. Not that s/he was entirely on his or her own in the matter, as the study of ducal officials shows. The powerful nature of the Estates in an urbanised region led to further restrictions on ducal power, as well as providing important financial reserves.

Boffa's study of the nature and organization of the combatants is equally

rewarding. It serves above all to remind the reader of the variety and complexity of medieval military organization (a point often missed by military historians who confine their studies to the modern world). The role of what he calls the 'nobility and chivalry' of Brabant is set in the context of the contribution of the urban militias and the many specialists. Among this last group he describes the role of artillery, both ducal and urban, showing its increasing importance.

His concluding section deals first with mobilisation, logistics, pay and types of units; there is plenty of fresh material here to help make sense of military operations at a tactical level. Then Boffa explores the nature of traditional obligations and financial inducements which recruited men in to the forces of the duchy and sustained them. Finally, he looks at exemptions from military service (another timeless issue), and considers the size of forces available to the ruler. That the very modest number of 2,500 is considered enough to make a duke 'one of the great rulers of the time' tells us much about the constraints upon his power, most notably exercised by the Estates. Small numbers engaged in warfare do not need to imply limited impact upon wider society, even to the point of its breakdown, as a glance at failing states in the modern world evidences.

Boffa identifies a period of transition (from feudal society to state bureaucracy), and is clear that Brabant in 1400 had not achieved this yet. The nation state, with all its malign implications in the expansion of warfare, still lay in the future. Yet he is keen to point out that the fifteenth century was not an age of decadence, as the equally malign influence of Huizinga's *Waning of the Middle Ages* still encourages people to believe. This thesis has been long refuted, but those outside the field of medieval studies are seldom aware of newer interpretations. Boffa's work makes a valuable contribution to ensuring that historians, and especially military historians, have no excuse to remain ill-informed.

Matthew Bennett
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Acknowledgements

Begun in Brussels, continued in Chiba and Rome, it was in Cambridge that my (preliminary) enquiry into the military history of the duchy of Brabant in the later Middle Ages was completed. A long enough trajectory for so small a work- but did not Ulysses spend longer simply in returning home?

I will never forget the moment when the late lamented Professor André Uyttébrouck suggested that I begin a doctoral thesis under his supervision. This was a key moment in my academic career and I regret profoundly that he cannot read this work and criticise it as he could do so well. After the premature loss of this eminent historian, fate placed me under the direction of Professor Claire Billen, and then under the supervision of Professor Peter Spufford, both of them historians of integrity and great competence. It is a remarkable experience to have three different supervisors in succession. The same subject can be analysed in various ways and radically different approaches are suggested. From a strictly methodological point of view, this favours an open mind. It is also a unique opportunity to establish a special relationship with several renowned researchers and to benefit from their knowledge and experience. I cannot thank them enough, especially as they have always supported me with the greatest vigour.

Other people have also helped me, but they are too numerous to all be listed. Even if I do not give their names here, I will always remember their assistance. I should nonetheless mention David Guillardian, Dominique de Paepe and, last but not least, Stephen Wells, without whom I could never have completed this work. Their help was not only valuable, but indispensable. Nor do I forget my dear wife Naoko H., who stoically endured my long waking nights and my many whims and demands for the sake of the completion of my Magnum Opus. It remains for me to thank Professor Mark Blackburn who enabled me to survive in this strange country of “England”, as well as the Guinness brewery, Ensemble Studios for Age of Kings, and the Cambridge University Kendo Society (*Tsurugi-bashi*) who provided me with the leisure and diversions necessary to the completion of so strenuous a task.

My final thoughts are for my father, who, having maintained his strength for long enough to see this work in manuscript, did not live to see the book in print. He will, sadly, not be able to read this work, which I dedicate to his memory.

Sergio Boffa

July 2003, Brussels – Kawasaki – Cambridge

Pour mon Père,
et A. Uyttebrouck,
tous deux, disparus trop tôt . . .

Preface

Military history is all too often confused with the traditional history of battles. This discipline therefore receives much less attention nowadays than religious, economic or social history. This is regrettable, as the phenomenon of warfare was part of the everyday life of medieval man. The principal consequence of this rejection is that there exists no detailed study or overview of the military history of the duchy of Brabant. There are only a few monographs, often rather dated, dealing with isolated events such as the battles of Steppes, Worringen and Baesweiler. The duchy of Brabant cuts a pitiful figure in comparison with the county of Flanders or the principality of Liège, which for some decades have benefited from the attention of two excellent historians, Verbruggen and Gaier. With this present work, I hope to fill a part of this void. The history of Brabant is so extensive that it is impossible for me to exhaust the subject in a single book. For this reason, I have restricted myself to the long reign of Joan (1356–1406). To begin with, this was a richly eventful period. The political life was particularly lively as we can observe the political triumph of the three Estates of Brabant and the emergence of the House of Burgundy in the Low Countries. Furthermore, the reign of Joan lies in the midst of the Hundred Years' War. In Brabant as in the neighbouring principalities, the forms of medieval warfare were changing rapidly and deserve a detailed analysis. Finally, fifty years is a period long enough for me to draw some general conclusions from it. I shall not scruple, however, to go beyond these chronological bounds when it seems necessary. It would be a shame not to cite certain remarkable documents anterior or posterior to the events which I am studying. Nonetheless, I shall not go beyond the year 1430, when the duchy was absorbed into the Burgundian domains and underwent major political and institutional reforms. I am fully conscious of not having addressed all the facets of my subject. The limits imposed on this work and the bulk of the records at my disposal oblige me to pass over certain matters, some of them important, concerning medieval warfare. Economic problems are therefore not considered. The sources on this subject are so abundant that another book would have to be devoted to them. Similarly, the complexities of fortifications, the mentality of the combatants and their armament, must all unfortunately be absent from my work. Even so, I believe that I have presented a coherent view of the military organisation of Brabant during the second half of the fourteenth century.

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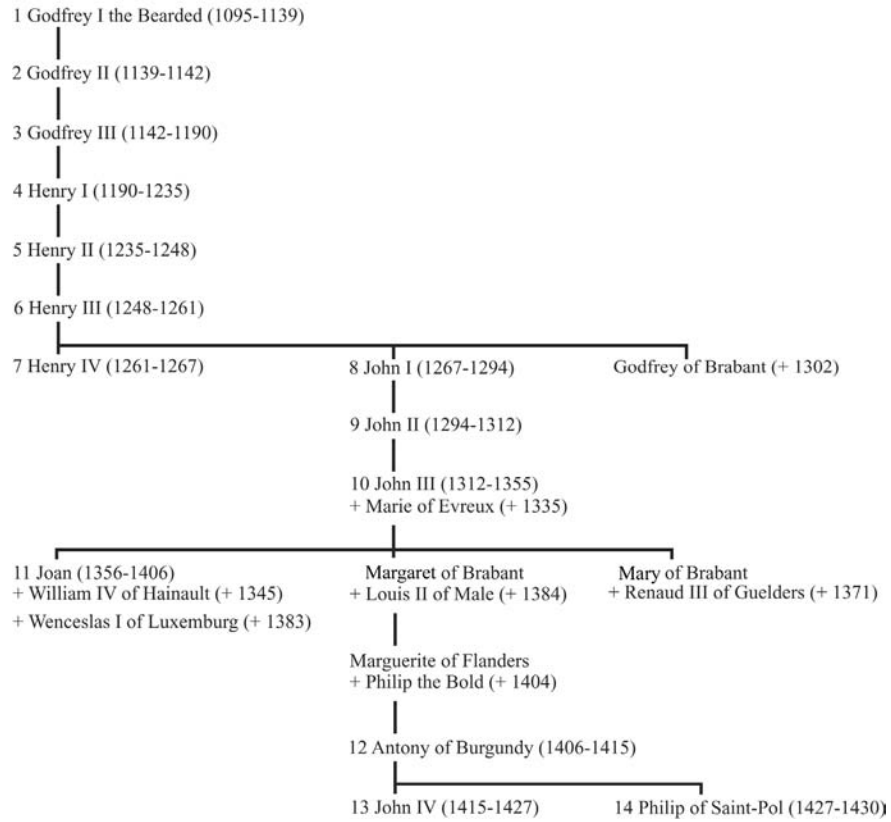
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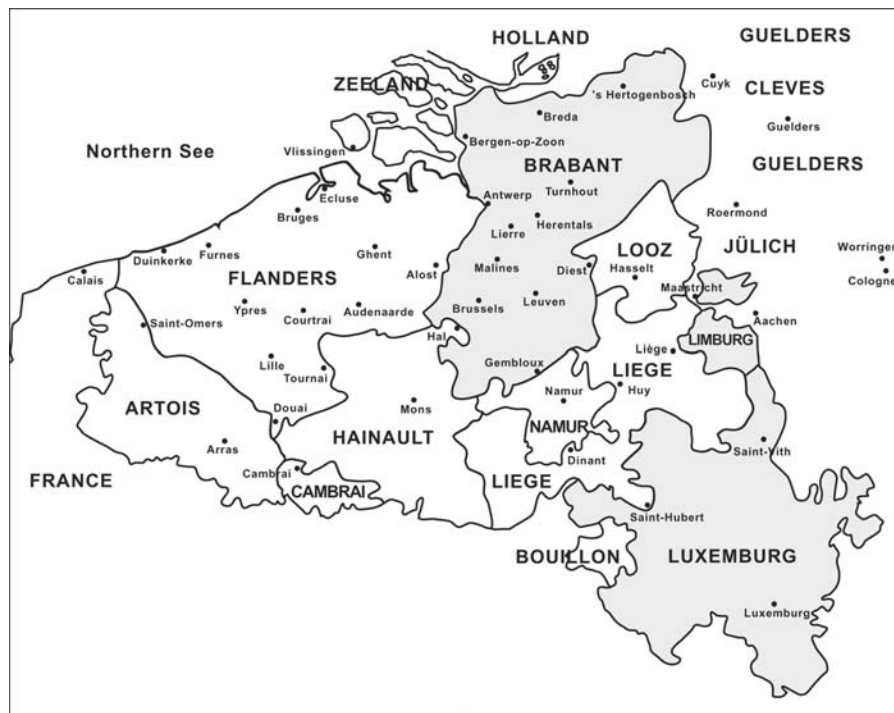
Abbreviations

ADN	Archives départementales du Nord (Lille)
AGN	<i>Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden</i>
AGR	Archives générales du royaume (Brussels)
ASAN	<i>Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur</i>
ASRAB	<i>Annales de la Société royale d'archéologie de Bruxelles</i>
AVB	Archives de la ville de Bruxelles
AVL	Archives de la ville de Louvain
BCRALOB	<i>Bulletin de la Commission royale des anciennes lois et ordonnances de Belgique</i>
BCRH	<i>Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BM	<i>Belgisch museum voor de nederduitsche tael- en letterkunde en de geschiedenis des vaderlands</i>
BN	<i>Biographie nationale</i>
BR	Bibliothèque royale (Brussels)
BTG	<i>Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis</i>
BY	De Klerk and An., <i>De Brabantsche</i>
CB	Chartes de Brabant
CBruX	<i>Cahiers Bruxellois</i>
CC	Chambre des comptes
CF	Cour féodale de Brabant
CLux	Chartes de Luxembourg
col.	column
CR	Comptes en rouleau
DD	De Dynter, <i>Chronicon</i>
ESB	<i>Eigen schoon en de Brabander</i>
f.	folio
KUL	Katholiek Universiteit Leuven
MA	<i>Le Moyen Age</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
Mss div.	Manuscripts divers
n.	note
NBW	<i>Nationaal biografisch woordenboek</i>
no	numero
n. st.	new style
PCEEB	<i>Publication du Centre européen d'études bourguignonne (XIV^e–XVI^e s.)</i>
r.	recto
RAG.	Rijksarchief van Gelderland (Arnhem)
RBHM	<i>Revue belge d'histoire militaire</i>
RBN	<i>Revue belge de numismatique</i>
RBPH	<i>Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire</i>
RIHM	<i>Revue internationale d'histoire militaire</i>
RN	<i>Revue du Nord</i>

<i>RUB</i>	<i>Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles</i>
RUG	Rijks Universiteit Gent
s.d.	<i>sine datum</i>
s.l.	<i>sine loco</i>
SS	<i>Scriptorum</i>
UCL	Université Catholique de Louvain
ULB	Université Libre de Bruxelles
ULg	Université de Liège
v.	verso
VH	Van Heelu, <i>Rymkronyk</i>
vol.	volume

Short genealogy of the house of Leuven/Brabant





Map 1. The Low Countries around 1300



Map 2. The duchy of Brabant in the fourteenth century

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Part One
THE EVENTS

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1

Military History of the Duchy during the Reigns of Wenceslas of Luxemburg and of Joan (1356–1383)

The war of the succession of Brabant (15 June 1356–4 June 1357)

The succession to John III (December 1355) was a key moment in the history of the duchy, conditioning its course throughout the second half of the fourteenth century.¹ In 1347, the eldest daughter of John III, Joan of Brabant, was promised in marriage to Wenceslas, count of Luxemburg. Their marriage was celebrated a few years later.² At that time, nobody expected Joan to succeed her father. Two of the three sons of John III were still alive at the time of the betrothal, and one at the time of the marriage. Their deaths, first of Henry (d.1349) and then of Godfrey (d.1352), completely altered the situation. For the first time since the twelfth century, the duke of Brabant had no male heir. Of his three daughters, he selected Joan and designated her as his sole heir. He intended thereby to forestall the troubles that might spring from the claims of the husbands of his two younger daughters: Louis of Male, count of Flanders, husband of Margaret of Brabant, and Renaud III, count of Guelders, husband of Mary of Brabant. The duke wished to be sure that his decision would be respected. On 8 March 1355 (n. st.), he assembled the representatives of the principal towns and freeholds, who undertook to remain united and to recognise, after his death, one person alone as sovereign of all his estates.³ On 17 May, the principal feudatories made the same undertaking.⁴ On the death of John III (5 December 1355), Joan and Wenceslas succeeded him; but on 3 January 1356, they were obliged to concede the charter of the *Joyeuse Entrée* in exchange for the support of the duchy.⁵

Louis of Male contested the arrangements made by the late duke and demanded a division of his territories. The new sovereigns of Brabant could not accept this, by virtue of the first article of the *Joyeuse Entrée*; nor could the members of the Estates, owing to their oaths in 1355.⁶ The count remained intransigent and tried underhandedly to seize the seigniory of Malines, which

¹ De Smet, *Mémoire sur les guerres*; Lindemans, 'De oorlogen tusschen Brabant en Vlaanderen'; Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre de la succession du Brabant'; Blockmans, 'De erfstrijd tussen Vlaanderen en Brabant'.

² Between 16 November 1351 and 20 April 1352 (Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 1; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 27; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 185–7).

³ BY, II, p. 473.

⁴ BY, II, p. 475.

⁵ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, pp. 20 et seq.

⁶ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 228–9. On the *Joyeuse Entrée* see Chapter 7.

had been under Brabançon control since the treaties of Saint-Quentin (June 1347).⁷ This enclave within Brabant played an important economic role, as it permitted control of the basin of Rupel and assured commercial relations between Antwerp and the other towns of Brabant. From January 1356, the count entered secretly into negotiations with the Magistracy of the town,⁸ and on 13 April, he had his possession of the seigniorship recognised by the bishop of Liège and the chapter of Saint-Lambert.⁹ This seizure of power was a direct attack on the sovereignty of the duke of Brabant, and relations between the two principalities rapidly declined towards a state of war. The count of Flanders justified this aggression on different grounds entirely: he had not yet received the dowry promised by John III to his wife at the time of their marriage, and for this, he demanded reparations.¹⁰

At the end of the month of May, Wenceslas prepared for the worst, recruiting men-at-arms and reinforcing the fortresses of the duchy.¹¹ On 5 June, Joan and Wenceslas gave up some of their jewels as security against the sum of 15,000 *vieux écus*.¹² The day after, the Estates granted them an extraordinary aid of 450,000 *vieux écus*, to provide means to organise the defence.¹³ On 15 June 1356, Louis of Male declared war,¹⁴ and three days later ordered his troops to invade Brabant, making for the abbey of Affligem.¹⁵ This monastery had been reinforced by a considerable garrison and was an important Brabançon outpost.¹⁶ Rather than lay siege to it and lose the advantage of surprise, the Flemish pushed on into the duchy without delay.¹⁷ Wenceslas and his men advanced rapidly to meet them and the two armies met near the village of Asse on 19 June.¹⁸ As neither the count of Flanders nor the duke of Brabant wished to risk a pitched battle,¹⁹ negotiations were undertaken on the initiative of Wenceslas. It was agreed that to Margaret should be assigned the seigniorship of Malines or some equivalent possessions within Brabant. The count even received secret assurances from the Brabançon negotiators that he would gain possession of the coveted seigniorship.²⁰ Satisfied, Louis of Male retired to his own domains and demobilised his army.²¹

⁷ Laurent, 'Les conventions de Saint-Quentin'; Lucas, 'John III, Duke of Brabant'.

⁸ De Limburg-Stirum, *Cartulaire*, I, pp. 501–2; II, p. 143.

⁹ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 226–6.

¹⁰ BY, II, p. 545; *Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 229; *Rymkronyk van Vlaenderen*, p. 848.

¹¹ The first act mentioning the recruitment of men-at-arms dates from 28 May 1356 (AGR, CB, 914).

¹² AGR, Mss div., 383, f. 115–17.

¹³ *Den luyster*, I, p. 137.

¹⁴ BY, II, p. 476.

¹⁵ Van Werveke, *Gentse stads*, pp. 184, 223.

¹⁶ The abbey is even called 'tcasteel tAffelghem' by Despars, *Cronycke*, II, p. 440.

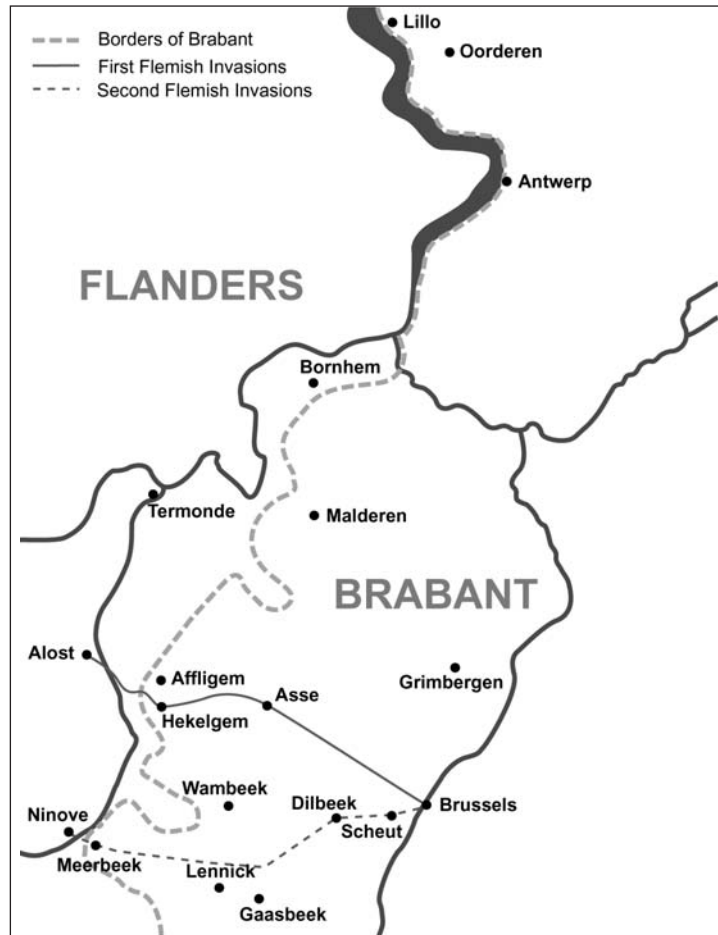
¹⁷ *Breve chronicon*, p. 27.

¹⁸ The presence of the duke at Asse is confirmed by a document dated from that place (AGR, CB, 983).

¹⁹ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 469.

²⁰ BY, II, pp. 477–80; De Limburg-Stirum, *Cartulaire*, II, p. 155.

²¹ *Breve chronicon*, p. 27; Van Werveke, *Gentse stads*, p. 223; BY, II, p. 481; De Limburg-Stirum, *Cartulaire*, II, p. 147.



Map 3. The war of succession of Brabant (1356–1357) (1)

The peace was short-lived. The duchess and the Magistracies of Brussels and Leuven did not accept the conditions proposed by the count and too easily accepted by Wenceslas. The Brabançon negotiators were arrested and the duke was excluded from the negotiations.²² As Laurent and Quicke remark, this was a ‘véritable coup d’état’.²³ By about 15 July the peace was broken.²⁴ The count of Flanders gathered a new army between Grammont and Ninove.²⁵ In Brabant, the situation was poor. The duke was in conflict with the towns when he needed the support of their militias. To ensure the neutrality of Joan’s other sister during the coming conflict, Joan and Wenceslas offered to Mary of Brabant, on 25 July, the

²² BY, II, p. 416; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 90.

²³ Laurent and Quicke, ‘La guerre’, pp. 92–3.

²⁴ *Breve chronicon*, p. 27.

²⁵ *Breve chronicon*, p. 28.

freehold of Turnhout and eight other villages and an annual rent of 7,000 *florins*. In exchange, she and her husband were to renounce any claim to the estates of Joan.²⁶

The first skirmishes began at the start of the next month.²⁷ On 7 August, a small Flemish fleet moored before Antwerp and blockaded the Scheldt. About a thousand men-at-arms disembarked and laid siege to the town.²⁸ For three weeks, another flotilla operated before Lillo, destroying the villages of Lillo, Oorderen and Coustelle.²⁹ The second invasion began on 9 August 1356.³⁰ This time, the Flemish pushed further south so as to avoid the abbey of Affligem and attack the capital of the duchy directly. From Ninove they advanced on Brussels, ravaging the seigniorship of Gaasbeek and many small villages.³¹ A Brabançon force under the orders of Gerard, count of Berg, attempted to stop them at Lombeek-Notre-Dame, but had to fall back on Brussels as the enemy were too numerous.³² On 12 August, the Flemish arrived in sight of the capital and took position between Molenbeek-Saint-Jean and Anderlecht,³³ while the Brabançons took position on the plain of Scheut. Should they hazard a pitched battle, or fortify themselves in the city and wait for reinforcements? After a council of war, it was decided to give battle at Scheut on 17 August.³⁴ The day was lost and would be known by the name of *quade woensdag*.³⁵ The Brabançons retreated towards Brussels. The knights, being on horseback while the Flemish army was composed principally of infantry, were largely able to escape from death or capture. An unpleasant surprise was waiting for the refugees. The Bruxellois, wishing to prevent the Flemish entering the city on the tails of the routers, kept the gates of the capital closed. The fugitives therefore headed further south so as to put themselves beyond the enemy's reach. On the next day (18 August), the Magistracy of Brussels decided to surrender. The count of Flanders was recognised as the legitimate lord of the town.³⁶ On 20 August, he made a triumphal entry into Malines,³⁷ and by the end of the month, the most important towns of Brabant had submitted: Leuven³⁸ and Vilvorde³⁹ on the 22nd, Antwerp⁴⁰ and the land of Grimbergen⁴¹ on the 23rd, and Tirlemont,⁴²

²⁶ AGR, Mss div., 1.770, f. 3–5; CB, 926; BY, II, pp. 482–5.

²⁷ *Breve chronicon*, pp. 27–8.

²⁸ Goovaerts, 'La flotte de Louis de Male'; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, III, pp. 15–19, 25–8.

²⁹ *Breve chronicon*, p. 28; Goovaerts, 'La flotte', pp. 45, 48, 56, 57, 58.

³⁰ Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 90; Villani, *Cronica*, III, 6, p. 206; Van Werveke, *Gentse stads*, p. 237.

³¹ *Breve chronicon*, p. 28; Despars, *Cronycke*, II, p. 440.

³² *Breve chronicon*, pp. 28–9.

³³ Villani, *Cronica*, III, 6, p. 206; Despars, *Cronycke*, II, p. 440.

³⁴ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 230; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 469–70.

³⁵ Schayes, 'Chronique . . . Rouge-Cloître', p. 87.

³⁶ BY, II, pp. 490–3, 497; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 231–2.

³⁷ Van Doren and Hermans, *Inventaire*, I, pp. 53–5; II, p. 18; BY, II, pp. 493–5.

³⁸ BY, II, p. 505; DD, III, p. 27; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 232; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 91.

³⁹ BY, II, pp. 498–9.

⁴⁰ BY, II, pp. 499, 503; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 232; Verachter, *Inventaire*, pp. 48–49; Goovaerts, 'La flotte', pp. 37, 48, 57–8.

⁴¹ BY, II, pp. 501, 505.

⁴² BY, II, p. 502; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 232.

Lierre,⁴³ Halen⁴⁴ and Léau⁴⁵ on the 24th. Only Maastricht, 's Hertogenbosch and Nivelles remained loyal to Wenceslas, and that last was shortly to fall into enemy hands.⁴⁶ The remote position of the other two places explains why they were not disquieted.⁴⁷ The count of Flanders also demanded the principal Brabançon lords should pay him homage, and many obeyed him, although significant numbers did remain faithful to Joan and Wenceslas.⁴⁸

The Flemish military offensive was partnered with a diplomatic offensive. On 17 August, an alliance was concluded between Louis of Male and Engelbert of La Mark, bishop of Liège.⁴⁹ Some days later, he defied Joan and Wenceslas⁵⁰ and on 21 August, the first Liégeois troops attacked Brabant.⁵¹ William I, count of Namur and rival to Wenceslas for the possession of the domains of Mirwart, Orchimont, Lomprez, Villance, etc.,⁵² seized the opportunity. On 18 August, he struck the south of Brabant.⁵³ Shortly afterwards, however, on 24 August, Louis of Male asked them to cease the warlike preparations as he now had the control of the duchy.⁵⁴ This control rapidly proved illusory, since as the Flemish militias wished to return home, Louis of Male could place only small garrisons in the conquered areas and had no real occupying force.⁵⁵ The count of Flanders lacked leverage over the Brabançon towns, which began to regret Joan and Wenceslas.⁵⁶

After Scheut, the remnants of the Brabançon army regrouped at Leuven. The duke could not remain there as the townspeople reproached him for the defeat and announced that they intended to surrender.⁵⁷ Wenceslas departed to rejoin his brother, the king of the Romans, while a large number of knights returned to the duchy of Limburg or to the lands of Outre-Meuse.⁵⁸ Joan did not accompany her husband. She took shelter in her dower lands of Binche, where she remained for one month.⁵⁹ Then, at the end of September, she arrived at 's Hertogenbosch,

⁴³ BY, II, p. 500.

⁴⁴ BY, II, p. 502.

⁴⁵ BY, II, p. 501.

⁴⁶ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 232; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 7; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 186.

⁴⁷ This is also the case for Diest, Heusden, Grave, Limburg, Dalhem, Wassenberg, Rolduc, Sprimont and Kerpen, which the count of Flanders summoned to pay him homage (BY, II, pp. 514–15).

⁴⁸ BY, II, pp. 506–14, 515–16; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 233.

⁴⁹ BY, II, pp. 487–90; Schoonbroodt, *Inventaire*, p. 215; De Limburg-Stirum, *Cartulaire*, II, pp. 480–2; Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 243–6.

⁵⁰ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 185.

⁵¹ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 235; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 7; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, pp. 186–7; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 91; *Annales Floreffienses*, p. 629.

⁵² Bertholet, *Histoire*, preuves, p. XXXIX; Balon, 'L'organisation', pp. 62–3.

⁵³ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 235; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 91; *Annales Floreffienses*, p. 629.

⁵⁴ Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, pp. 91–2.

⁵⁵ Van Werveke, *Gentse stads*, p. 237; *Breve chronicon*, p. 30.

⁵⁶ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 232–3.

⁵⁷ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 232; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 185.

⁵⁸ Huber, *Die Regesten*, p. 202.

⁵⁹ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 185; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 231.



Map 4. The war of succession of Brabant (1356–1357) (2)

which was still faithful to the Brabançon cause.⁶⁰ There she represented the legitimate government of ‘free’ Brabant. On 6 October, she informed Leuven and Brussels that the king of the Romans supported Wenceslas and that an army was coming to liberate Brabant.⁶¹ Hope revived little by little and many lords openly declared themselves on the duchess’ side.⁶² On 24 October, Everard t’Serclaes, a patrician of Brussels, and a few companions in arms entered the capital by night, hauled down the enemy flag and set the Brabançon standard flying over Brussels once again. This daring action impressed the populace, who rose in revolt and put the Flemish garrison to flight. It took only five days for the

⁶⁰ AGR, CB, 932 bis; Piot, ‘Renseignement’, p. 190.

⁶¹ BY, II, p. 516; AGR, CB, 936, 937, etc. Jean le Bel estimates their strength at ‘bien mille ou XII^C armeures de fer’ (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 235).

⁶² BY, II, pp. 510–13.

other towns of the duchy to follow suit. At the end of October, the duke of Brabant was able to write to his brother that the whole duchy had been liberated except for the seignior of Malines.⁶³ Winter approached and the weather worsened. Both sides took to skirmish warfare as it was no longer possible to undertake large-scale military operations at this time of year.⁶⁴ The Brabançons successfully harassed the county of Namur⁶⁵ and, on 26 November 1356, a truce of one month was agreed.⁶⁶ On 6 February 1357, the count of Namur undertook no longer to wage war on Brabant except as a vassal of the count of Flanders, whom he would serve with only a restricted number of men-at-arms.⁶⁷ Abandoned by his allies, the count of Flanders did not admit defeat. The war continued, but in an episodic manner, without the raising of large troops, without major *chevauchées* and without any important battles. This state of affairs could have persisted indefinitely, but the Brabançons wished to find a solution rapidly.

Joan and Wenceslas appealed to William of Bavaria, count of Hainault and of Holland. On 29 March 1357 (n. st.), he declared himself on the side of Brabant in exchange for being enfeoffed with the seignior of Heusden. This alliance was strengthened on 12 April by the promise of mutual aid to the extent of 1,000 knights and 8,000 foot soldiers.⁶⁸ The duke appeared ready to mount an offensive when, on 5 May, William of Bavaria suddenly changed sides. He offered to support Louis of Male and even to fight alongside him if a peaceful solution could not be found.⁶⁹ Trapped, Joan and Wenceslas accepted the idea of arbitration by the count of Hainault, and on 1 June, they swore to carry out his judgement.⁷⁰ On 4 June, peace was concluded and the war of the succession of Brabant was over.⁷¹ The peace was entirely favourable to the count of Flanders. The seignior of Malines was ceded to him and became an independent enclave within Brabançon territory. As he had not yet received his wife's dowry, Margaret was granted the fief of the town of Antwerp and its dependencies. This was a severe blow for Brabant as, although the territories were held in fief from the duke, they nonetheless disappeared totally from the life of the duchy between 1357 and 1406.⁷² In exchange, Louis of Male recognised Joan's legitimate right to the duchy. However, as the towns of Brussels, Leuven, Nivelles and Tirlemont, as well as a certain number of nobles, had recognised him as duke of

⁶³ DD, III, p. 29; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 237.

⁶⁵ Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 92; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 237–8; DD, III, p. 29; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 186.

⁶⁶ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 42.

⁶⁷ Bertholet, *Histoire*, VII, preuves, pp. 20–1; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 240. Balon is mistaken in presenting a list of about forty foreign vassals who had to serve the count on this occasion. I find therein several Brabançons including John of Leefdaal and Gerard of Rotselaar, lord of Vorselaar and marshal of the duke of Brabant. It is not likely that these would have fought against Joan and Wenceslas (Balon, 'L'organisation', pp. 35–6).

⁶⁸ BY, II, p. 535; Van Mieris, *Groot*, II, p. 867.

⁶⁹ Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 21; BY, II, pp. 536–41; Devillers, *Cartulaire*, I, p. 499.

⁷⁰ BY, II, pp. 542–3; Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 23.

⁷¹ BY, II, pp. 543–8.

⁷² Uyttnebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 47–8.

Brabant and he had taken this title only at their request, he continued to bear the title throughout his lifetime. Apart from the territories gained by Flanders, let us recall that the freehold of Turnhout was held in fief by Mary of Brabant and her husband and that the castle, town and lands of Heusden had been ceded in fief to William of Bavaria. Brabant thus emerged much reduced from this conflict.

**Peter Coutereel and the popular uprisings
in the town of Leuven (1360–64, 1378–83 and 1387)**

In the fourteenth century, Brabant was much less troubled by democratic or popular movements than were its neighbours, Flanders and Liège.⁷³ We can identify a few attempts at insurrection but these crises were only momentary. Only the town of Brussels in 1303–1306 underwent any great disturbance.⁷⁴ This is easily explained. Traditionally, the dukes of Brabant had always supported the patricians, but at the death of John III, the situation changed radically. Wenceslas declared himself the adversary of this privileged class, which tried to govern the city without regard for the wishes of the prince. He was not at all accustomed to such an attitude as the duchy of Luxemburg had no such powerful and semi-autonomous towns. Furthermore, the towns had imposed the *Joyeuse Entrée* on him, and their behaviour during the war of the succession of Brabant had been worse than dubious: they refused a peace treaty agreed by Wenceslas; after the defeat at Scheut, Brussels closed its doors to him; Leuven insisted he leave the city; the principal towns of the duchy offered scant resistance to the enemy, and so on. Wenceslas thus had good reason to be angry with them. Wisely, the duke did not attack their power directly, but rather remained a spectator to the internecine discord that weakened them.

I shall not give an account here of the troubles that disturbed the government of the town of Leuven between 1360 and 1387. Although their significance for the social and institutional history of Brabant is great, from the military point of view we find nothing but a few shows of force by Wenceslas. The duke camped his army under the walls of Leuven in October 1361, February 1363, January 1380 and December to January 1382. What is more, the most interesting period – the government of Peter Coutereel – has been the subject of several excellent works. Let us simply note that Wenceslas profited greatly from the internecine discord of the people and lineages of Leuven. The patricians were humiliated before the duke and he extracted enormous sums of money, destined to help defray the costs of the war of the succession of Brabant. It was commonly said in Brabant in the fourteenth century that in less than one year the duke had obtained more money from the city of Leuven than if he had sold the city and its lands outright.⁷⁵

⁷³ Poulet, *Mémoire sur Pierre Coutereel*; Sermon, *Geschiedenis van Peeter Coutherele*; Van Uytven, 'Peter Couthereel en de troebelen'; Van Uytven, 'Plutokratie in de 'oude democratieën'.

⁷⁴ Bonenfant, 'Le premier gouvernement démocratique'.

⁷⁵ DD, III, p. 54; BY, II, p. 175.

The revolt of the trades of Brussels (22 July 1360)

The revolt of the artisans in Brussels in July 1360 is explicable in terms of a number of factors.⁷⁶ To begin with, the economic situation in the city of Brussels was disastrous. In the course of the fourteenth century the town had extended large subsidies to the dukes of Brabant for war expenses. This expenditure weighed heavily on the treasury of Brussels and the Bruxellois were loaded down with taxes.⁷⁷ This situation influenced the plebs, naturally hostile to the patricians from among whom the members of the Magistracy were recruited. Secondly, the Flemish occupation of 1356 caused internal conflicts between the lineages of Brussels. The friends of the count were opposed to the friends of the duke and the patrician class was clearly divided.⁷⁸ By contrast, the commoners had remained distrustful of the Flemish. To reward their loyalty, Wenceslas granted them a part in the government of the town. It was at the end of 1356 or in the first days of 1357 that the plebeians took a place in the government.⁷⁹ This gain was only temporary and from 1359 the patricians once more governed the city alone.⁸⁰ The commoners must have dreamed of regaining the power they had recently lost, and the action of Peter Coutereel in Leuven was surely an example for the Bruxellois. Financial distress, division among the patricians, humiliation of the commons and the appearance of a charismatic leader; everything was in place for disaster.

If none of our sources indicate that Peter Coutereel played a role in the preparations for the uprising in Brussels, the facts speak for themselves. In Leuven, the commoners seized power on the evening of 21 July. The uprising in Brussels took place the next day. The common accord among the artisans should not surprise us. Also in 1360, popular uprisings broke out in Antwerp.⁸¹

Initially, the artisans of Brussels were to take up arms on 23 July. However, the patricians learned of their belligerent intentions, and in the middle of the night they gathered in arms before the town hall. Gerard of Rotselaar, lord of Vorselaar, who had been at Leuven the previous day where he had perhaps learned of the existence of a conspiracy in the capital, had hastened to inform the Magistracy of Brussels. After taking counsel, it was agreed to search out the leaders of the insurrection and to call the powerful corporation of the butchers before the *échevins*. Menacingly, the butchers refused to obey and replied that they would come when they had time. The uprising was not general but limited to the butchers, fullers and weavers. The latter joined the fight by attacking the *Steenporte*, a part of the first city wall.⁸² On hearing this news, the patricians

⁷⁶ Boffa, 'Réflexions sur la révolte des métiers bruxellois'; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 125–8; Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 107–19.

⁷⁷ Favresse, 'Documents', pp. 111–12; Dickstein-Bernard, *La gestion*, pp. 112–15.

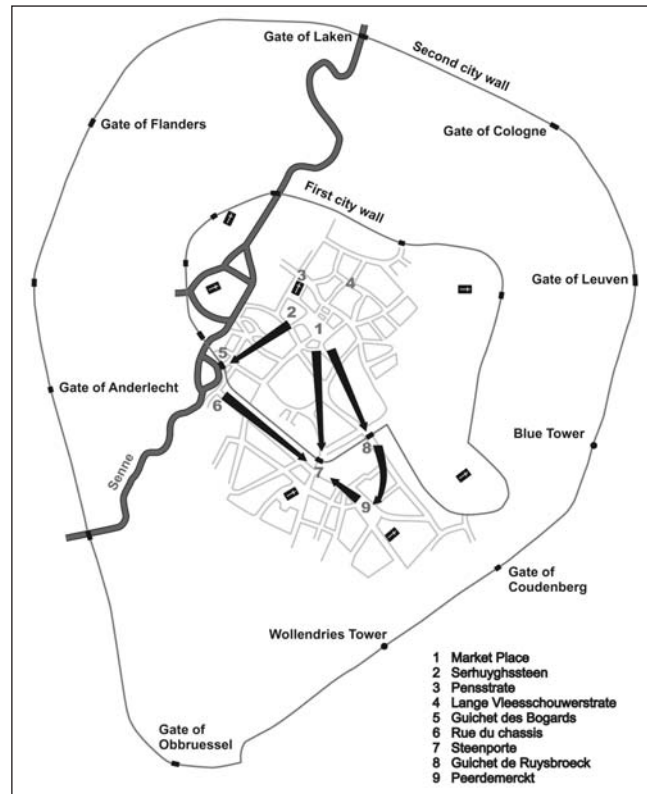
⁷⁸ BY, II, pp. 508–10; Smolar-Meynart, 'Ducs de Brabant et lignages bruxellois'.

⁷⁹ BY, II, pp. 524–33.

⁸⁰ DD, III, pp. 52–3; BY, II, p. 166; *Die alder excellenste*, f. 153 r.; *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 94; Favresse, 'Documents', pp. 132–9.

⁸¹ Van Acker, *Antwerpen*, p. 101.

⁸² Wauters, Demeter and Wasseige, *La première enceinte de Bruxelles*; Debonne, Gautier, Olivier and Purcar, *Bruxelles, la première enceinte*.



Map 5. The revolt of the trades of Brussels (1360)

decided to prevent the corporations joining forces by attacking the butchers. A murderous battle was joined in the *Marché-aux-Tripes*. Armed with cleavers, the butchers fought valiantly, but their enemies had the advantage of arms and experience. They fell in large numbers and were swept back into their own quarter, pursued by the victors. Meanwhile, the weavers and fullers continued to attack the *Steenporte*. By means of bundles of straw and barrels of tar, they sought to set it alight, while some tried to burst in the doors or climb the walls. Two priests came in the name of the magistrates and charged them to stop the assault, but they went unheard. The patricians, following the advice of Gerard of Rotselaar, divided their men into four groups. The largest remained to protect the town hall. The second went out from the first city walls by the *guichet des Bogards* so as to set fire to the *rue du Chassis* where many fullers had their dwellings. The third went to the aid of the guards at the *Steenporte*. The last group left by the *guichet de Ruysbroeck* at the *Sablon*, with orders to sound trumpets as soon as they saw flames appear on the banks of the Senne. The defenders of the *Steenporte* with difficulty repulsed the assaults of the fullers and the weavers. Suddenly, the assailants saw that fire was devouring their quarter, while the sound of trumpets announced the approach of new enemies. They hesitated and were put to flight.

In the aftermath of the uprising, the populace was subjected to reprisals. Many of the ringleaders were executed or banished.⁸³ Other measures intended to prevent another revolt were applied. The butchers, weavers and fullers were forbidden to bear arms on pain of mutilation. The artisans were required to return at once, when work had ceased, to the quarters of the town where they resided.⁸⁴ Even so, the struggle continued, as indicated by a sentence pronounced in June 1364 decreeing the banishment of the butcher Jacques de Meyere and about a hundred of his friends, all guilty of provoking uprisings.⁸⁵ Thus defeat and repression did not discourage the populace of Brussels from renewing the combat against the patricians.

The war against Waleran of Fauquemont (March 1364–19 July 1365)

The territory of Fauquemont was the largest seignior in lands of Outre-Meuse.⁸⁶ In 1337, its lord undertook to follow the king of England with a force of two hundred men-at-arms.⁸⁷ This clearly demonstrates the power the possession of this domain brought with it. As it allowed control of a long stretch of the commercial route linking Maastricht to Cologne, it had also an important strategic function. This is why, at the start of the fourteenth century, John III had undertaken several sieges against the fortress of Fauquemont, both to protect Brabançon merchants and to affirm his power over the region. Unfortunately, all these shows of strength had no real effect.⁸⁸ In 1352, John, lord of Fauquemont, died leaving no male heir. Philippine, his eldest sister, inherited the seigniories of Fauquemont, Montjoie and Saint-Vith.⁸⁹ Waleran of Fauquemont, lord of Born, Herpen, Ravenstein and Sittard, was the closest male relative of the deceased. He demanded Philippine's inheritance on the basis of the Salic law, which excluded women from the succession. After many negotiations Waleran received the lands as an imperial fief, at a date unknown but probably after the end of 1356. The other claimants were furious and, in 1358, to prevent the conflict degenerating, the case was referred to the judgment of Wenceslas and of Thierry of Heinsberg, count of Looz.⁹⁰ Thus the duke of Brabant became involved in the affair. Finally, in 1362, the emperor sanctioned Waleran's claims on condition that he pay an annual rent to Philippine. On 11 March 1364,⁹¹ Waleran not having respected the financial clauses of the agreement, Philippine

⁸³ *Anonymi, sed veteris*, pp. 94–5; Haraeus, *Annales*, I, p. 338.

⁸⁴ Willems, 'Stadsordonnantie', pp. 294–314.

⁸⁵ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, p. 24.

⁸⁶ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, p. XCVIII; De Chestret de Haneffe, *Renard*, pp. 27–38, 50–51; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 169–72; Van De Venne, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 111–15.

⁸⁷ Van De Venne, *Geschiedenis*, p. 102.

⁸⁸ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 48–51, 67–70, 76–8, 90–3.

⁸⁹ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 12.

⁹⁰ AGR, CB, 1.804.

⁹¹ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 67.

sold all her rights over the seigniorship of Fauquemont to Wenceslas and Joan.⁹² As the other lords who had some rights over the place also did as much, the territory became legally part of the domain of the dukes of Brabant.⁹³

Waleran of Fauquemont was not ready to give up his prized possession, and declared war on Wenceslas.⁹⁴ From his castle of Ravenstein he organised many raids into Brabant and attacked maybe a score of Brabançon villages.⁹⁵ The duke levied a war tax,⁹⁶ gathered his men-at-arms and reinforced the garrison of the town of Grave to counter the enemy raids.⁹⁷ Then he laid siege to Ravenstein. According to Haraeus, it took place in June or July 1364, while Wenceslas returned from Reims where he had attended the coronation of the new king of France.⁹⁸ A ram (*eenen beer*) was constructed by the besiegers, but the castle was well defended and the Brabançons had to retreat.⁹⁹ They then made for the castle of Herpen which fell after a few days.¹⁰⁰ This latter victory did not change the attitude of Wenceslas, who wished to resolve the dispute peacefully. A *Landfriede* was concluded between Wenceslas, duke of Brabant, William VI, duke of Jülich, Engelbert of La Mark, archbishop of Cologne, and the towns of Aachen and Cologne.¹⁰¹ Charles IV granted them full powers to resolve the dispute which opposed Wenceslas and the town of 's Hertogenbosch on one side and Waleran of Fauquemont on the other.¹⁰² On 30 June 1365, Waleran promised to respect the decisions of the *Landfriede* and, on 19 July 1365, the sworn members pronounced in favour of the duke and duchess of Brabant.¹⁰³ Victorious, Wenceslas immediately installed a *drossard*,¹⁰⁴ but declared that he did not wish to infringe the rights which Waleran could claim over the seigniorship. On the contrary, he was ready to open his feudal court to him and to present himself alongside him before all the other courts so as to confirm their respective rights.¹⁰⁵ Although military operations ceased in 1365, it was only in 1378, on the death of Waleran, that the duke officially took possession of

⁹² Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 95.

⁹³ Laenen, *Les archives*, p. 59; Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 88.

⁹⁴ The conflict probably began shortly after the transaction by William VI of Jülich, as in November 1364 there was already war between the duke of Brabant and Waleran of Fauquemont (AGR, CB, 2.226).

⁹⁵ Van De Venne, *Geschiedenis*, p. 114.

⁹⁶ AGR, CB, 2.378.

⁹⁷ AGR, CB, 2.244.

⁹⁸ Haraeus, *Annales*, I, p. 341.

⁹⁹ BY, II, p. 181.

¹⁰⁰ I must emphasise that neither de Dynter nor the author of the *Brabantsche Yeesten* mentions this second siege. It is Butkens who informs us on this subject. The expenses of this conflict reached 9,463 *moutons* and are found included in the accounts of the *recette générale* of Brabant 1364–65 (AGR, CC, 2.351). The sale of stocks taken in this war brought in the sum of 1,209 1/2 *moutons* (AGR, CC, 2.352).

¹⁰¹ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', pp. 93–4.

¹⁰² AGR, Mss div., 8, f. 367 v.; CC, 5, f. 8 v.

¹⁰³ AGR, CC, 21, f. 33, 36, 367 v.; Mss div., 1.000 bis, f. 8 v.

¹⁰⁴ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 77 et seq.

¹⁰⁵ AGR, CC, 14, f. 57.

the seignior of Fauquemont when Renaud of Fauquemont, lord of Born and Waleran's heir, sold him all his rights. By this acquisition, Brabançon influence in the lands of Outre-Meuse was strengthened.¹⁰⁶

The first war of Guelders (February 1366–19 October 1368)

In the early second half of the fourteenth century the duchy of Guelders was torn apart by civil war.¹⁰⁷ Two powerful enemy families, the Hekeren and the Bronckorsten, vied for power. Renaud III, duke of Guelders, tried to prevent the disorder, but failed as all his vassals were partisans of one or other camp. The situation worsened further when his brother Edward, frustrated by his share of their father's inheritance, took the Bronckorsten side. As the latter recognised Edward as duke, Renaud III was forced to ally with the Hekeren. On 25 May 1361, near Tiel, the two sides confronted each other. Renaud III was captured and imprisoned by his brother who alone governed the duchy. Mary of Brabant, wife of Renaud III, took refuge in her dower lands of Turnhout, and pleaded incessantly for the help of her family by marriage. Wenceslas, as brother-in-law to Renaud III and Mary, finally took up their cause. From 1365 he protested against the imprisonment of Renaud III and against Edward's refusal to pay Mary's dowry-rents.¹⁰⁸ According to Nijhoff, Edward had wished to ally himself with Wenceslas but the latter had wisely rejected the proposition. The duke of Guelders had therefore revenged himself by confiscating Mary's revenues.¹⁰⁹ This may explain the relatively long delay between the capture of Renaud III and the first Brabançon complaints.¹¹⁰ Another and possibly graver problem opposed Edward and Wenceslas to each other. The policy of Brabançon expansion to the east, the acquisition of the county of Fauquemont (1364) and that of the lands of Millen, Gangelt and Waldfeucht (1365) directly menaced the southern frontier of Guelders.¹¹¹

At the start of 1366, a general mobilisation of the host was ordered in Brabant.¹¹² Wenceslas' troops assembled at 's Hertogenbosch under the command of Leon of Bouchout, ready to invade the Bommelerwaard. In February 1366, with the aid of Goswijn of Varik, a local inhabitant, the Brabançons scaled the walls of Zaltbommel and seized the town.¹¹³ Edward

¹⁰⁶ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 69 et seq.

¹⁰⁷ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, pp. XCVIII–CII; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 107–9.

¹⁰⁸ On 6 July 1365, Wenceslas complained before the town of Arnhem that Edward, duke of Guelders, was keeping Mary's revenues (Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', p. 98).

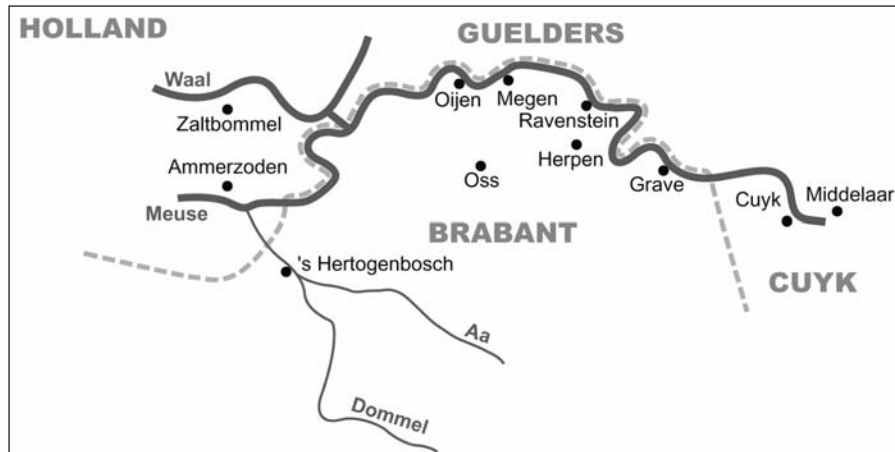
¹⁰⁹ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, p. XCIX.

¹¹⁰ A curious document of 25 January 1362 speaks already of a war between Brabançons and Gueldrois. This charter does not date the event. We cannot therefore identify it with a particular conflict (Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, p. 357).

¹¹¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 15–16; Quicke, 'Documents', p. 71; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 173–4.

¹¹² AGR, CB, 2.371; Kerremans, *Etude*, p. 216.

¹¹³ According to Butkens, other places were captured by the Brabançons, but I cannot confirm this (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 482–3).



Map 6. The northern border of the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch

reacted promptly. He assembled a large force and began a siege of Zaltbommel before the end of February. The town was recaptured from the Brabançons within twenty days, and Edward took the opportunity to arrest and behead all the partisans of the Hekeren. The loss of their bridgehead, and the size of the force raised by the duke of Guelders, forced the Brabançons to retire. This was only a pause, and both sides reinforced themselves. On 20 May 1366, the duke of Brabant concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault and Holland.¹¹⁴ They were to protect each other mutually with three hundred *glaives*. Edward allied himself with John of Arkel, bishop of Liège, who was already an enemy of Wenceslas because of the fight for the succession to the county of Looz. He also dealt with the last of the internal conflicts in Guelders.¹¹⁵ In August, September and October the Gueldrois attacked the duchy several times: directed by the lord of Kuilenberg, they headed for the town of Grave and the seigniory of Cuyk, strategic places on the Meuse.¹¹⁶ John of Mierlaar, who had a private quarrel with 's Hertogenbosch, decided to profit from the situation. He carried out a surprise attack, destroyed a number of villages in the *mairie* and carried off a large number of prisoners.¹¹⁷ The defence of Brabant, both around 's Hertogenbosch¹¹⁸ and in the lands of Outre-Meuse,¹¹⁹ was efficiently organised. In 1367 and at the start of 1368 there were no further large-scale operations. At least our sources are silent on the subject. Nor does it seem that either party sought a diplomatic solution. In 1368 Wenceslas raised a new army at Maastricht with the intention of rescuing

¹¹⁴ Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, pp. 188–9.

¹¹⁵ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, pp. C–CI.

¹¹⁶ Coldewey, *De heren*, p. 182.

¹¹⁷ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, pp. 225–30.

¹¹⁸ AGR, CB, 2.469.

¹¹⁹ AGR, CB, 2.420. The document is unfortunately not dated. Verkooren proposes 18 August 1366.

Renaud III.¹²⁰ According to Jean Froissart, the total strength was as high as 1,200 *lances*.¹²¹ The army crossed the Meuse on 21 September¹²² and fought several actions in the neighbourhood of Meersem.¹²³ Intimidated by this new military deployment in his lands, the duke of Guelders preferred to negotiate. On 28 September 1368, Albert of Bavaria, Edward's chosen arbitrator, approached the duke of Brabant.¹²⁴

Wenceslas, having the upper hand, stated his demands to his adversary,¹²⁵ then it was the turn of the duke of Guelders to state his grievances.¹²⁶ Negotiations could begin. The clauses of arbitration of the 19 October 1368 largely addressed the demands of the duke of Brabant but did not ratify them all.¹²⁷ Although certain authors are critical of the outcome of the conflict,¹²⁸ Wenceslas was well served by the sentence of arbitration. The person with most to complain of was Renaud III, who remained in captivity. Not all the bones of contention were dealt with and further meetings, in 1368, 1369 and 1371, would still be necessary to try to resolve the situation.¹²⁹ It is therefore not surprising to see Edward in conflict with Wenceslas in 1371.

The destruction of the castle of Hemmersbach (December 1366)

The security of the commercial routes linking the principalities of the Low Countries to the towns on the Rhine was a constant problem in the fourteenth century.¹³⁰ Attacks on merchants constituted an important source of 'revenues' for the minor lords of the region. The duchy of Jülich was particularly dangerous for travellers, owing to the marked lack of enthusiasm shown by William VI in the pursuit of the malefactors.¹³¹ This passivity is explicable by the common interest which bound the lord to his vassals; it was logical that the duke should avoid confronting the *raubrittern* from among whom he recruited his men-at-arms and even his counsellors.¹³² However, the neighbouring lords, indi-

¹²⁰ AGR, CB, 2.616.

¹²¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 17.

¹²² *Korte chronijcke*, p. 66.

¹²³ AGR, CB, 2.605 et seq. This *chevauchée* was of short duration as several documents dated between 29 September and 1 October 1368 already refer to reimbursements for the expenses incurred (AGR, CB, 2.604–2.617).

¹²⁴ According to Butkens, the peace was to be signed on the initiative of the count of Flanders, but he is mistaken (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 487).

¹²⁵ AGR, CB, 2.601–2.602.

¹²⁶ AGR, CB, 2.622.

¹²⁷ The Brabançon prisoners were to be released without obligation and the duke of Brabant would regain possession of all the rights of his predecessors over Megen (Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, pp. 225–30).

¹²⁸ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 109.

¹²⁹ De Ram, 'Particularités', pp. 232, 234, 242; AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65.

¹³⁰ Bertholet, *Histoire*, VII, p. 65; Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas', pp. 100, 103–4; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 112.

¹³¹ Koelhoff, *Cronica*, p. 702; Ennen, *Geschichte*, pp. 646–7.

¹³² Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 179–80.

vidually or in accordance with a *Landfriede*, regularly conducted their own punitive actions. For example, during the summer of 1367, the bishop of Liège conducted the *chaude chevauchée* in the territory of Jülich.¹³³ The destruction of the castle of Hemmersbach is another example. This fortress, situated near Kerpen, was a refuge for plunderers who were known to harass merchants who passed nearby.¹³⁴ Scheiffart of Merode was the lord, but at this time he was still a minor and his possessions were administered by his tutors, who were responsible for the attacks. Many were those who complained before the duke about their losses and Wenceslas decided to put a stop to this. He gathered a large troop and marched to the castle. Hemmersbach was besieged and violent battles began. On 22 December 1366, the fortress was taken and razed and fourteen of the guilty were executed. According to Ernst, the siege of the castle of Hemmersbach cost the duke 3.000 *florins*.¹³⁵

On 27 October 1366, Charles IV had named Wenceslas ‘Vicar of the Empire on this side of the mountains’ (*Vicaire de l’Empire en deçà des monts*) and ordered the towns of the empire to swear obedience to him.¹³⁶ This title, though mostly honorary, nevertheless gave him the right to fly the imperial banner on his expeditions and, as representative of the emperor, to entitle himself as defender of the public peace and the imperial roads. The short time that elapsed between the adoption of this title and the attack on the castle of Hemmersbach suggests a direct link between the two events.¹³⁷

The war against Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg (1368 and 1370–1371)

The origin of the discord between Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg, and the duke of Brabant was the recovery by the latter of the land of Wassenberg in 1368.¹³⁸ This territory, situated in the duchy of Jülich, included a small number of villages on the Roer, around the castle of Wassenberg, as Doveren, Ratem and Birgelen.¹³⁹ The seigniorship had belonged to John II, duke of Brabant, who had mortgaged it to Godfrey (II), lord of Heinsberg, on 30 December 1310.¹⁴⁰ The Brabançons had always regretted the loss of this domain, and one of the articles of the *Joyeuse Entrée* obliged Wenceslas to regain it and reunite it with Brabant.¹⁴¹ It is possible that even before 1368 there had been military actions by both sides, but we possess only fragmentary information on the subject.¹⁴²

¹³³ D’Outremeuse, *Chronique*, II, p. 194.

¹³⁴ We find the term *ruter* (vagabond or highwayman) to describe them in the BY, II, p. 186.

¹³⁵ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 486; Ernst, *Histoire*, V, p. 127.

¹³⁶ Wurth-Paquet, ‘Table . . . Wenceslas’, p. 104.

¹³⁷ BY, II, p. 186.

¹³⁸ Curiously, both the *Brabantsche Yeesten* and the chronicle of de Dynter are mute on this subject. Thus, it is very difficult for us to know the sequence of events as we have only a few normative sources.

¹³⁹ AGR, CC, 2.436, f. 25 et seq.

¹⁴⁰ AGR, CB, 230, 232, 242, 2.567.

¹⁴¹ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 97.

¹⁴² AGR, CB, 2.570, 2.577, 2.588, 2.623.

Nor do we know more about the first phase of the conflict, which probably ended when the first negotiations were organised in order to resolve the dispute by arbitration. In fact, the successors of Godfrey (II) had usurped certain rights and committed abuses. Wenceslas lodged a complaint and, in December 1368, a commission presided over by Robert of Namur was charged with establishing the crimes of Godfrey (III) and their total cost.¹⁴³ This total was no doubt judged to exceed the value of the mortgage, as the land of Wassenberg reverted to the duke of Brabant at no further cost to him. This judgment should have taken effect before 24 February 1369.¹⁴⁴ Clearly there was no resolution. Godfrey (III), disappointed by the sentence, refused to yield and, in November 1370, there was talk of *guerra* between the two princes.¹⁴⁵ In March 1371 they were still at war, but the protagonists seemed to be seeking a peaceful solution once more.¹⁴⁶ The negotiations failed and the crisis deepened. War taxes were levied in the lands of Outre-Meuse.¹⁴⁷ In July 1371, the *drossard* of Brabant and Renaud Berneau, seneschal of Fauquemont, rode at the head of 200 men for a fortnight in Heinsberg. The objective of the expedition, which began on 2 or 3 July, was to ravage the enemy crops.¹⁴⁸ There was fighting near Friesheim and near Brachelen.¹⁴⁹ It is possible that other military operations were also organised, such as an attack in the neighbourhood of Voerendaal.¹⁵⁰

Given the silence of the sources, we do not know a precise date for the ending of the conflict. At the end of July 1371, the seneschal of Rolduc was still charged with the defence of the territories under his jurisdiction.¹⁵¹ On 1 August, new taxes were levied by Renaud Berneau to support men-at-arms.¹⁵² On the 6th, at Brussels, we find Wenceslas and Joan in the company not only of their usual counsellors but also all the officers of justice¹⁵³ and many financial officials from these regions. This appears to have been a council of war among those responsible for the defence of the domains near to enemy territory.¹⁵⁴ At the same time, the seneschal of Brabant was in Heinsberg.¹⁵⁵ Brabant was thus still at war with the sire of Heinsberg and nothing indicates the conflict had ended by the time Wenceslas attacked the duke of Jülich in mid-August 1371. A letter from Wenceslas to Renaud Berneau, dated to 27 January 1374 by Verkooren, mentions the coming of the lord of Dalenbroek, that is Renaud of

¹⁴³ AGR, CC, 17, f. 3 v.–4 v.

¹⁴⁴ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 74–8; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 175; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 66–7.

¹⁴⁵ AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 87.

¹⁴⁶ AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 97.

¹⁴⁷ AGR, CB, 2.895–2.896.

¹⁴⁸ AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 107.

¹⁴⁹ AGR, CB, 2.872–2.873, 2.894–2.897, 2.901.

¹⁵⁰ AGR, CB, 2.870.

¹⁵¹ AGR, CB, 2.866 bis.

¹⁵² AGR, CB, 2.943–2.945, 3.040.

¹⁵³ Namely, the *drossards* of Limburg, Rolduc, Dalhem and Fauquemont.

¹⁵⁴ All these personages figure as witnesses to an act of Joan and Wenceslas (AGR, CB, 2.867).

¹⁵⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 22.

Fauquemont, to Brussels and the letters of safe-conduct required to guarantee his safety.¹⁵⁶ It seems that even at this late date the brother of Godfrey (III) was still at war against the duke of Brabant, even if we find no trace of military operations in this period. Even if the conflict ended at some undetermined date after August 1371, it was still not until 8 November 1383 that Godfrey (III) became a vassal of the duke of Brabant and renounced his claims to the land of Wassenberg.¹⁵⁷

The *chevauchée* of Jülich (August 1371)

The lords of Jülich disliked the Brabançon policy of territorial expansion and the establishment of a powerful Brabançon bloc on the southern frontiers of their territory.¹⁵⁸ This resulted in more or less severe tensions between these two principalities. The chroniclers are unanimous in describing the insecurity of the commercial routes leading to Cologne. The minor German lords, with the tacit approval of the dukes of Jülich, regularly attacked wealthy merchants from Brabant, Liège and Cologne. In November 1367¹⁵⁹ and September 1369,¹⁶⁰ the duchies of Brabant and Jülich had almost come to blows. Only by the intervention of the *Landfriede* was peace preserved.¹⁶¹ Once again, Wenceslas sent an embassy to the duke of Jülich to protest against this situation.¹⁶² William VI gave it a frosty reception. Vexed, the duke of Brabant decided to undertake a punitive expedition. At least, this is the account given by the most trustworthy narrative sources for the origins of this new war. According to van Oeteren, the *chevauchée* of Jülich was linked to the war against Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg. The knights of Jülich of whom the duke of Brabant complained to William VI were men in the service of the lord of Heinsberg who, to strike at Wenceslas' interests, had attacked Brabançon merchants. The refusal of the duke of Jülich to rein in his relative then provoked a war.¹⁶³ Although this theory is seductive, it does not seem to me to relate to the principal cause of the

¹⁵⁶ The act is dated 27 January, without mention of year (AGR, CB, 3.048).

¹⁵⁷ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 105–10. According to this author, this act was concluded against the wishes of or without the approval of Joan. Unfortunately, he does not explain why. The accord was ratified on 10 March 1385 (n. st.) (AGR, CC, 132, f. 106 v.–107; BY, II, pp. 658–9; Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 116–19).

¹⁵⁸ Oidtmann, *Die Schlacht bei Baesweiler*; Ernst, *Histoire*, V, pp. 130–41; Zimmerman, 'Die Schlacht bei Baesweiler'; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 177–204.

¹⁵⁹ The origin of this dispute was the jealousy of the duke of Jülich over the prerogatives granted by Charles IV to his brother (Pelzel, *Karl IV*, p. 849; Kelleter, *Die Landfriedensbünde*, p. 46).

¹⁶⁰ The motive for this second conflict was also the attacks on Brabançon merchants in Jülich (Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 179).

¹⁶¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 18–20; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 18; DD, III, pp. 59–60; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, p. 16.

¹⁶² The most eminent members of this embassy were the lord of Vireton, Bernard (I or II), lord of Bornival, John t'Serclaes, the archdeacon of Hainault, and Godfrey of la Tour, general receiver (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 19–20).

¹⁶³ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', I, pp. 39–40.

Map 7. The *chevauchée* against Jülich (1371)

conflict. If the *chevauchée* of Jülich were only a part of the war of Heinsberg, we might be surprised by the sudden interest in that conflict shown by neighbouring principalities and by the no less sudden reluctance of the towns or Estates to pursue a conflict caused by an article of the *Joyeuse Entrée*. In the absence of more exact testimony, I prefer to follow the traditional interpretation.

At the beginning of August 1371, the duke of Brabant gathered his men-at-arms and defied William VI.¹⁶⁴ Around 13 August he had a fruitless meeting at Breda with Albert of Bavaria and Edward, duke of Guelders, finding neither an ally nor a diplomatic solution to the conflict.¹⁶⁵ He then betook himself to Maastricht where his army awaited him.¹⁶⁶ This town was not chosen at random. An ancient Roman road passed by it, leading directly to the town of Jülich, the enemy capital.¹⁶⁷ Joan remained in Brussels and had prayers said for her husband¹⁶⁸ while at Leuven, on 18 August, a procession was organised by the prelates and religious orders.¹⁶⁹

The Brabançon army was imposing. The combatants came not only from the possessions of Joan and Wenceslas but also from the principality of Liège, the counties of Namur, Hainault and Flanders and even from the kingdom of

¹⁶⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 20.

¹⁶⁵ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65, 106; De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 242.

¹⁶⁶ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65; *Relation du monastère du Saint-Esprit*, f. 258.

¹⁶⁷ Oidtmann, *Die Schlacht*, pp. 8–9; Zimmerman, 'Die Schlacht', p. 274.

¹⁶⁸ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65.

¹⁶⁹ AVL, 4.995, f. 24 v.

France.¹⁷⁰ The number of Wenceslas' troops probably reached 2,500 combatants,¹⁷¹ a figure in accord with the 2,000 people mentioned in the receipts that have come down to us.¹⁷² The militias of Brabant were not mobilised for this expedition although,¹⁷³ as a favour and after long hesitation, the towns of Brussels and Leuven did 'lend' some archers to the duke.¹⁷⁴ The army of William VI numbered 1,000 *lances*.¹⁷⁵ He was aided by Edward with 600 men-at-arms.¹⁷⁶ Some German knights, attracted more by plunder than by the defence of a noble cause,¹⁷⁷ and some urban militias answered the call.¹⁷⁸ The army of the dukes of Jülich and Guelders thus suffered from a considerable numerical inferiority. On 20 August, Wenceslas took the offensive. The Brabançons advanced towards the town of Jülich, probably passing by Rolduc.¹⁷⁹ That evening they camped in enemy territory. The next day (21 August), learning that the enemy was on the march, Wenceslas ordered his men to strike camp. Pillaging and burning accompanied the army's march.¹⁸⁰ On the evening of the second day the village of Baesweiler was reached. The Brabançons were now only a dozen kilometres from the enemy capital. The duke wisely decided to grant his troops a rest before undertaking the last stage and joining battle.¹⁸¹ On Friday morning (22 August), the Germans appeared before the camp while the Brabançons were at Mass, causing a panic.¹⁸² They charged and the vanguard, commanded by the count of Saint-Pol and his son, was thrown back, leading to a general rout. The Brabançons were defeated and Wenceslas imprisoned in the castle of Nideggen on the Roer.¹⁸³

The next day (23 August) the bad news reached Brussels.¹⁸⁴ Joan immediately called for the help of the duchy¹⁸⁵ and of the neighbouring lords.¹⁸⁶ She sent a

¹⁷⁰ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21; *La chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 356–7; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 18; Kervyn De Lettenhove, *Istore*, II, p. 117; Van Merchtenen, *Cornicke*, pp. 136–7.

¹⁷¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21; Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60.

¹⁷² De Raadt, 'La bataille de Baesweiler'.

¹⁷³ Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 229.

¹⁷⁴ AVL, 4.995, f. 22 v., 23, 24 v.

¹⁷⁵ Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60.

¹⁷⁶ Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60.

¹⁷⁷ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 20–1; DD, III, p. 60; BY, II, p. 202; *Annales Novesienses*, p. 589; Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 18; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 357.

¹⁷⁸ Wartena, *De stadsrekeningen*, I, pp. 3–4.

¹⁷⁹ *Chronique anonyme conservée*, p. 495; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21; AGR, CB, 2.895–2.897.

¹⁸⁰ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21; Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60; DD, III, p. 60; BY, II, p. 197.

¹⁸¹ It may also be that this halt was owing to the presence of the enemy nearby (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22).

¹⁸² The militia of Brussels and their numerous carts blocked the duke's men-at-arms, who had to drive the animals at sword point in order to manoeuvre freely (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 22–3).

¹⁸³ DD, III, p. 60.

¹⁸⁴ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 64.

¹⁸⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 25, 26 r.–v., 28, 30, 33 v., etc.

¹⁸⁶ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 186 et seq.

friar preacher to enquire of the duke's ransom, which was however too high to pay.¹⁸⁷ The Estates met regularly but without any concrete results. Moreover, they took advantage of the opportunity to present a united front in order to obtain new privileges for themselves and restrain the ducal prerogatives.¹⁸⁸ We find no sign of military preparations for a counter-attack on the duchy of Jülich. The inactivity of the Estates forced Joan to appeal to the Emperor, who promised that as soon as summer came he would avenge his stepbrother.¹⁸⁹ On 27 May 1372, Charles IV declared officially that he would mount a campaign against William VI,¹⁹⁰ and summoned his vassals for the 4 June.¹⁹¹ The army assembled at Aachen was imposing. We note the presence of the archbishops of Cologne, Trier, Mayence and Magdeburg and the bishops of Liège, Spire, Munster, Cambrai, Toul, Utrecht and Metz. Among the lay princes, Wenceslas, the young king of Bohemia, Albert of Bavaria, his brother-in-law, Otto of Bavaria, the Count Palatine, Albert, duke of Saxony, and Robert, duke of Bavaria were at the rendezvous.¹⁹² Joan was also present in person.¹⁹³ Sadly, we do not know the number of men-at-arms that accompanied this remarkable assembly.

Before invading enemy territory, a final council of war was organised. Many lords advised that it was desirable, before ravaging the domains of a valiant knight, a relative of many there present, to make a last effort to recall him to his obedience.¹⁹⁴ The emperor agreed and a delegation was sent to the rebellious prince. The duke of Jülich, no doubt surprised by the determination of Charles IV, received the embassy amicably. Rather than see an imperial army descend on his duchy he agreed to set free the duke of Brabant.¹⁹⁵ On 20 June, he knelt before his sovereign and unreservedly confessed his fault.¹⁹⁶ Next day (21 June), Wenceslas and William VI were officially reconciled. The duke of Brabant was to pay no ransom and all those still held prisoner to be released without conditions.¹⁹⁷ On 24 June, a treaty of friendship was concluded between the two princes. William VI promised in his own name and that of his heirs to defend the duchy of Brabant and its dependencies in exchange for the reasonably large sum of 50,000 small *écus*.¹⁹⁸ Wenceslas in turn promised to protect the duchies of Jülich and Guelders with the means of his duchy of Luxemburg, but without any financial return.¹⁹⁹ As Quicke remarks, 'n'était-ce pas en d'autres mots, un

¹⁸⁷ De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 243.

¹⁸⁸ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 474–6; II, pp. 781 et seq.

¹⁸⁹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 24–5; BY, II, p. 222; De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 244.

¹⁹⁰ Huber, *Die Regesten*, p. 419; Winkelmann, *Acta*, II, p. 603.

¹⁹¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 25.

¹⁹² D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, pp. 195–6; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 25.

¹⁹³ She is present at Aachen, on 25 June (AVL, 4.995, f. 57).

¹⁹⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 25.

¹⁹⁵ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 26.

¹⁹⁶ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 27–8; DD, III, p. 66; Bertholet, *Histoire*, VII, pp. 74 et seq.

¹⁹⁷ BY, II, p. 624; Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, p. 617; DD, III, pp. 66–8.

¹⁹⁸ Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, p. 620.

¹⁹⁹ Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, p. 621.

payement indirect de sa rançon qui était imposé à son ex-prisonnier?’²⁰⁰ The duke of Brabant was back in Brussels in the month of July. Although his liberation was celebrated,²⁰¹ he was criticised for having led Brabant into danger, and was accused of leading his people not as a shepherd but as a wolf.²⁰²

The tensions between the duke and the Estates of Brabant (1372–30 April 1374)

During the ten months of Wenceslas’ captivity, the towns profited by his absence to strengthen their power.²⁰³ In February 1372, they met at Brussels, promised each other mutual assistance and called for the observation of the charter of Cortenberg (1312) and the Walloon charter (1314).²⁰⁴ In April, they decided to reinstate the Council of Cortenberg²⁰⁵ and, in May, its members were sworn in.²⁰⁶ This was a serious challenge to the ducal authority.²⁰⁷ Wenceslas was in great need of money, as he had to repay the losses and ransoms of the men-at-arms who had served him in the *chevauchée* of Jülich, and pay 50,000 *petits écus* to William VI in exchange for his ‘protection’.²⁰⁸ He asked the country to grant him an extraordinary aid to cover his debts.²⁰⁹ After numerous meetings, on 16 September 1372 the nobles and the towns accepted this in principle.²¹⁰ In exchange, Joan and Wenceslas renewed and strengthened the charter of Cortenberg and the Walloon charter.²¹¹

A conflict arose over the selection of the receivers of the aid. The mission of these officers was not only to gather the money but also to disburse it for the agreed aims. We thus understand why the Estates tried to nominate receivers chosen by the *pays* of Brabant alongside those chosen by the duke.²¹² The duke was categorically opposed to this new intervention by the Estates. Impasse . . . In January 1373, the towns of Brabant addressed themselves to the count of Flanders. The duke did not appreciate this, and such was his anger that the towns

²⁰⁰ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 200.

²⁰¹ AVL, 4.995, f. 60 v.; Galesloot, ‘Notes’, pp. 475, 481.

²⁰² De Lewis, *Chronicon*, pp. 124–5.

²⁰³ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 492–4; Ernst, *Histoire*, V, pp. 140–141; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 134–7; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 238–55; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 205–20.

²⁰⁴ AVL, 4.995, f. 45; AGR, CB, 2.905; AVL, 249; *Den luyster*, I, pp. 144–6. The charter of Cortenberg and the Walloon charter are, along with the *Joyeuse Entrée*, documents of the greatest importance in the institutional history of the duchy.

²⁰⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 50.

²⁰⁶ AVL, 4.995, f. 53 v.

²⁰⁷ The Council of Cortenberg was an organisation composed of representatives of the nobility and the towns. Its purpose was the discovery and correction of abuses that hindered the good administration of the duchy.

²⁰⁸ Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, p. 620.

²⁰⁹ AVL, 4.997, f. 14 v.

²¹⁰ AVL, 4.997, f. 18 v.

²¹¹ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 147–55; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 32–44.

²¹² AVL, 4.997, f. 20.

dared no longer respond to the invitations of Louis of Male who tried to profit from the situation to increase his standing in Brabant. Brussels and Leuven feared reprisals.²¹³ The ramparts of the latter town were manned by archers and its deputies arrived at the meetings of the Estates with an armed escort.²¹⁴ On 23 April, to strengthen his hold over the town, the duke reformed the organisation of the Magistracy of Leuven and reinforced the power of the lineages.²¹⁵ As a result, Leuven refused to pay its share of the extraordinary aid. In October 1373, Brussels applied a different form of resistance by not carrying out the census of its population, which hampered the collection of the money.²¹⁶ The duke, tired of the delays and determined to overmaster the arrogance of the towns, left Brussels at the start of the year 1374. Accompanied by his wife, he withdrew to the castle of Genappe²¹⁷ where he collected men-at-arms from Luxemburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse.²¹⁸ This troop of ‘strangers’ attacked the surrounding areas and threatened the town of Nivelles, which was besieged on or around 9 April.²¹⁹ Finally, at the request of the towns, John of Arkel, bishop of Liège, was named as mediator and charged with calming the anger of Wenceslas.²²⁰ Under his auspices, negotiations began at Braine-l’Alleud.²²¹ An agreement was reached on 30 April 1374.²²² The towns agreed to make honourable amends, the union of 1372 was to be dissolved and a supplement of 40,000 *moutons* was granted. In exchange, Wenceslas agreed that the receivers of the aid should be nominated by the Council of Cortenberg, the towns and the *plat pays* of Brabant. The 900,000 *moutons* granted in 1372 should be used to compensate the combatants of Baesweiler, while the additional 40,000 *moutons* could be spent as the duke and duchess pleased. At last, on 4 July 1374, the ten receivers were nominated and charged to gather the successive payments over a period of four years (1374–77).²²³

²¹³ AVL, 4.997, f. 37. According to Piot, the rumour of a surprise attack against the towns of Brussels and Leuven was circulating even within the duchy (Piot, *Histoire*, p. 194).

²¹⁴ AVL, 4.997, f. 52, 56; Divaeus, *Annales*, III, p. 26.

²¹⁵ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 145–6; Cuvelier, *Les institutions*, pp. 251–2; Vander Linden, *Histoire*, p. 88.

²¹⁶ AVL, 4.998, f. 20.

²¹⁷ Uyttebrouck, ‘Les résidences’, p. 196.

²¹⁸ AGR, CB, 4.683–4.684, 5.253.

²¹⁹ *Chronijcke van Nederlant*, p. 34; De Stavelot, *Chronique*, p. 72; Haraeus, *Annales*, I, p. 347. Why did Wenceslas attack this town? Was it because it had refused to participate in the extraordinary aid (AVL, 4.997, f. 18 v.) or simply because it was the objective closest to the ducal retreat?

²²⁰ BY, II, p. 239; DD, III, p. 78; Daris, *Histoire . . . XIII^e et XIV^e*, pp. 613–14.

²²¹ AVL, 4.998, f. 65; BR, Mss, 18.734, f. 304 v.; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 495.

²²² *Den luyster*, pp. 164–70; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 147–52.

²²³ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 171–5.

The attempt on Wenceslas' life by the Saintronnaires (early January 1375)

Saint-Trond, situated between the duchy of Brabant and the principality of Liège, occupied an important strategic position.²²⁴ The dukes of Brabant had frequently tried and failed to appropriate the place. The Saintronnaires fought alternately for either side according to the vagaries of political chance. In the end the growth of the Brabançon town of Léau, an economic rival to Saint-Trond, pushed the Saintronnaires on to the side of Liège. In 1373, the duke neglected to pay the indemnity on 18,000 *florins* promised to the volunteers who had followed him in Jülich in August 1371. As their requests in May 1373²²⁵ and March 1374²²⁶ were not heard, the Saintronnaires decided to take action: they imprisoned about ten lords who had been appointed guarantors for the ducal debt.²²⁷ Worse yet, at the start of the year 1375, as Wenceslas was passing through Saint-Trond on his way to Hasselt, they attacked the duke's escort.²²⁸ Wenceslas was outraged by this affront and considered the attack as a genuine assassination attempt.²²⁹ On 6 January 1375, he summoned John (II), lord of Gronsveld and *drossard* of Limburg, to an assembly in Brussels to decide on reprisals.²³⁰ When Wenceslas arrested ten citizens of Saint-Trond, the militia of the town laid siege to the castle of Binderveld.²³¹ The Estates of Brabant intervened in the dispute and obliged Saint-Trond to treat with the duke. The Saintronnaires initially refused any compromise but, on 28 April 1376, they agreed to a mediation by deputies.²³² On 16 June 1376, a treaty, very much in the duke's favour, was concluded.²³³ Wenceslas was required to liquidate the arrears of the debt, amounting to 8,000 *écus*. Forty Saintronnaires who had taken part in the attack on the ducal escort were to make honourable amends at Tirlemont on 1 September, swearing solemnly that they had not wished to make an attempt on the duke's life. Twenty of these were to make a pilgrimage to Compostella. Twenty 'swords' were to serve the duke as he wished for one month. Finally, Wenceslas was to receive an indemnity, for which the towns of Liège and the county of Looz were to be guarantors. However, this accord rapidly became a dead letter. On 29 May 1377, Louis of Male promulgated a new agreement in similar terms.²³⁴ In 1378, the Saintronnaires had still not satisfied their obligations to the duke, despite another agreement of 12 March 1378 (n. st.).²³⁵ The dispute still existed at the time of accords between the prin-

²²⁴ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 244–8, 250–1; Charles, *La ville*, pp. 417–18; Charles, 'Léau', pp. 184–5.

²²⁵ AVL, 4.997, f. 59 r.–v.

²²⁶ AVL, 4.998, f. 57.

²²⁷ De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 248.

²²⁸ AGR, CB, 2.816. This document is mistakenly dated by Verkooren to 6 January 1371.

²²⁹ AGR, CB, 2.816.

²³⁰ AGR, CB, 2.816.

²³¹ Daris, *Histoire . . . XIII^e et XIV^e*, pp. 634–5.

²³² Straven, *Inventaire*, I, pp 95–102; Fairon, *Regestes*, I, pp. 436–8.

²³³ Fairon, *Regestes*, I, pp. 439–42; Gachard, 'Notice', p. 190.

²³⁴ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 533–4.

²³⁵ Fairon, *Regestes*, I, p. 451–8.

principality of Liège and the duchy of Brabant on 16 June 1378.²³⁶ It is at first sight surprising to see a small town hold out thus against the powerful duke of Brabant. We should remember that this town, an economic rival to Léau, lay within the principality of Liège, and that any precipitate action by Wenceslas might lead to a direct confrontation between the two principalities. The duke had thus to act, if not with prudence, then at least with moderation.

The war against the principality of Liège (August 1378–11 February 1379)

On the death of John of Arkel (1 July 1378), Eustache Persand of Rochefort was chosen to succeed him, on condition that he give up his claim if the Pope refused the nomination.²³⁷ So it was. Urban VI refused and conferred the bishopric on Arnold of Hornes, bishop of Utrecht (8 August 1378). The Liégeois envoys turned to Clement VII, the then antipope, who hastened to confirm the election of Eustache Persand.²³⁸ As the majority of the clergy and people of the principality declared for Arnold of Hornes, his rival implored the aid of Wenceslas. He promised that the Brabançons in the diocese of Liège would no longer be subject to the *tribunal de la paix*. Wenceslas could not refuse such an offer. The dukes of Brabant had always wished to free themselves of this Liégeois intrusion in the duchy.²³⁹

The Liégeois opened hostilities by attacking Landen in mid-August 1378. Although relations between the two principalities had been particularly strained in the preceding years,²⁴⁰ Wenceslas was surprised by this attack and proclaimed his desire to live in peace with his neighbour. He did not desire a war and appeared as the victim.²⁴¹ This may explain the presence alongside the duke of Brabant of several members of the *Landfriede*, such as Frederic of Saarwerden, archbishop of Cologne, William VI, duke of Jülich and Adolf of La Mark, count of Cleves.²⁴² In contrast, the participation of the towns of the duchy was minimal. They contented themselves with taking defensive measures in a conflict that they, not without reason, did not think concerned them. Wenceslas warned his officers in the duchy of Luxemburg of the imminent war and defied the Liégeois.²⁴³ They declared unanimously for Arnold of Hornes and burned the banner of Eustache Persand at the *perron* in Liège.²⁴⁴ Meanwhile the duke went to Maastricht, his base for operations in Liégeois territory. The conflict was no more than a mass of *chevauchées* and pillaging. The only important feat of arms was the destruction of the castle of Petersheim by the Liégeois in

²³⁶ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 540–546.

²³⁷ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 500–1; Ernst, *Histoire*, 5, pp. 146–7; Daris, *Histoire . . . XIII^e et XIV^e*, pp. 645–52; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 252–6; Lejeune, *Liège*, pp. 136–9.

²³⁸ De Stavelot, *Chronique*, p. 79.

²³⁹ Fairon, 'Un projet de démembrement'; Lejeune, *Liège*, pp. 112–14.

²⁴⁰ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 239–57.

²⁴¹ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 547–8.

²⁴² *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 376.

²⁴³ AGR, CLux, 1.240.

²⁴⁴ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 376–7.

October 1378. Violent fighting occurred in Brabant (Landen, Hannut, Jodoigne, Tirlemont, etc.), Liège (Tongres), Limburg (Millen and the region of Dalhem), Outre-Meuse (Petersheim) and even in Luxemburg (Han-sur-Lesse, the region of Marche, etc.).²⁴⁵

As these raids had little influence on the progress of the conflict, certain of Wenceslas' allies wished to give battle against the enemy. He refused as he considered the Liégeois unworthy of such an encounter. Butkens says justly that *sembloit il que la guerre se faisoit aux maisons et edifices et point aux personnes . . .*²⁴⁶ Dispirited, the archbishop of Cologne and the duke of Jülich withdrew not without acknowledging the courage of the army of Liège.²⁴⁷ The defection of these allies was a hard blow for Wenceslas. Worse still, within Brabant, Leuven was once more a prey to uprisings (December 1378).²⁴⁸ Wenceslas had to negotiate in order to have a free hand in dealing with his internal problems. Under the mediation of Louis of Male, a truce was concluded at Boyenhoven on 13 December 1378.²⁴⁹ The severe winter weather was probably not unconnected to the conclusion of an armistice.²⁵⁰ Arnold of Hornes then arrived in Liège and was warmly welcomed. Eustache Persand, realising that he had nothing to hope for from the Liégeois, abandoned the fight. The war no longer had any purpose. On 11 February 1379, a first meeting was organised to turn the truce into a definitive peace. There was agreement on restitution of goods, liberation of prisoners, payment of damages and the reestablishment of commercial relations.²⁵¹ This did not entirely resolve the dispute and a new list of grievances would be produced.²⁵² Finally, on 13 June 1379, arbitrators appointed by the count of Flanders pronounced a new judgement on the remaining points of difference.²⁵³ Four days later (17 June), the Brabançons accepted.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁵ Daris, *Histoire . . . XIII^e et XIV^e*, pp. 646–8.

²⁴⁶ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 501.

²⁴⁷ De Rivo, *Gesta*, pp. 41 et seq.; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 314.

²⁴⁸ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 359.

²⁴⁹ Fairon, *Regestes*, II, pp. 202–3; Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, VI, p. 138.

²⁵⁰ De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 316.

²⁵¹ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 555–9.

²⁵² AGR, CC, 72, f. 72; Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, p. 570.

²⁵³ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 560–77.

²⁵⁴ Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 577–8.

2

Military History of the Duchy during the Reign of Joan (1383–1406)

The taking of the castle of Reifferscheid (July–September 1385)

The last *Landfriede* in the region dated from 9 April 1383 and assembled the dukes of Brabant, Jülich and Guelders, the archbishop of Cologne and the towns of Cologne and Aachen.¹ It may have met at the instigation of Wenceslas (II) of Bohemia.² In 1385, John, lord of Reifferscheid, Renaud of Reifferscheid, lord of Bedburg, and their men disturbed the peace and the commerce. Among other misdeeds, they attacked the subjects of the duke of Luxemburg. They thus attracted the ire of the *Landfriede*. An imposing army was raised and placed under the command of Pothe of Chiastolowitz, seneschal of Luxemburg and representative of Wenceslas (II) of Bohemia. It included men-at-arms sent by all the members including the duchess of Brabant.³ In effect, although the links between the duchies of Brabant and Luxemburg had been severed, Joan had still to respect the undertakings made by her late husband. Traditionally the siege of the castle of Reifferscheid is dated to August and early September 1385. We must reconsider this chronology, as an act of the duchess informs us that the operation lasted for *X semaines moins I jour* and that the castle surrendered before 18 September 1385.⁴ In this case, the siege must have started by mid-July at the earliest. Unfortunately, the silence of the narrative sources does not permit me to confirm this. The Brabançon contingent in the expedition was significant. John (II), lord of Gronsveld and *drossard* of Limburg and Rolduc, commanded a troop of seventy *lances* and thirty-eight crossbowmen. Some miners from Liège were also under his command, no doubt with orders to sap the fortification.⁵ John, lord of Reifferscheid, understood that the position was untenable. On 11 October 1385, he was reconciled to the members of the *Landfriede*.⁶ Next day (the 12th) he and his brother made peace with Wenceslas (II) of Bohemia.⁷ They agreed to give up the castle and town of Reifferscheid to Pothe of Chiastolowitz,

¹ Ernst, *Histoire*, V, pp. 151–2; Kelleter, *Die Landfriedensbünde*, pp. 82–7; Ennen and Eckertz, *Quellen*, V, p. 79.

² Ernst, *Histoire*, V, p. 148.

³ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas II', p. 26.

⁴ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 119–21.

⁵ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–22.

⁶ Ennen and Eckertz, *Quellen*, V, p. 343; Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, p. 787.

⁷ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas II', p. 26.

who would hold them for two months before returning them. John of Reifferscheid undertook to ask pardon from the king of the Romans and promised not to act against the duchy of Luxemburg in the future. He also swore to take no vengeance against those who had taken part in the punitive expedition.⁸

The second war of Guelders (May 1385–23 October 1390)

William I, duke of Guelders, strongly desired to regain the lands of Millen, Gangelt and Waldfeucht.⁹ These seignories, along with the land of Wassenberg, were enclaves within the duchy of Jülich forming a defensive line protecting the lands of Outre-Meuse. They would also be a good base for *chevauchées* in Jülich. As William I was next in line to inherit that duchy, we can understand his uneasiness. The death of Wenceslas of Luxemburg (7/8 December 1383) and the alliances recently concluded with the king of the Romans (December 1383)¹⁰ and the king of England (February–April 1385)¹¹ strengthened William I's position but made him over-bold. In May 1385, under the arbitration of Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault and Holland, a parley was organised at 's Hertogenbosch so as to resolve the situation peacefully.¹² The negotiations failed and William I attacked the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch. To resist the invader, John (II) of Wittem and a company of men-at-arms were sent there. The lands of Outre-Meuse were not spared. John (II), lord of Gronsveld, who controlled the lands coveted by the duke of Guelders, successfully resisted an attempt to capture one of them.¹³ At the same time, Arnold of Hoemen, an important counsellor of William I but also a vassal of Joan,¹⁴ changed sides. From his castles of Middelaar and Ammerzoden, he ravaged Guelders.¹⁵ Unfortunately, this advantage did not last; on 24 June 1386, Paul of Haastrecht, *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch, and Arnold of Hoemen were surprised and captured by the enemy while attempting to supply the two fortresses. Middelaar and Ammerzoden fell soon after.¹⁶

The town of Grave, a Brabançon possession, was a strategic point of the first importance. Situated on the banks of the Meuse, it allowed whoever held it to invade the neighbouring territories at will. John of Wittem demanded that Wenemar of Cuyk, castellan of the town,¹⁷ allow him access. The latter was in a difficult position because his son John (VI) of Cuyk was engaged to a natural daughter of the duke of Guelders. So as to offend no one, he proposed to allow twenty-five *lances* to enter to protect the town, but that it should not be used as a

⁸ Wurth-Paquet, 'Table . . . Wenceslas II', pp. 26–7.

⁹ Juten, 'De Gelderschen in Brabant 1388'; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 137–256.

¹⁰ AGR, Mss div., 8, f. 659 v., 660 v., 671; Quicke, *Oorkonden*, pp. 351, 358–63.

¹¹ Knighton, *Chronica*, II, p. 271; Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. 134.

¹² Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 172; Devillers, *Cartulaire*, V, p. 679.

¹³ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 146.

¹⁴ AGR, CB, 5.834.

¹⁵ Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, p. 30.

¹⁶ *Historia Gelriae*, p. 61; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, p. 30.

¹⁷ Coldewey, *De heren*, pp. 187–96.

base for raids into Guelders. John of Wittem refused. When Wenemar gave way, his son imprisoned him and let the Gueldrois into the town. Brabant had suffered an important reverse and the recovery of Grave would be one of the major objectives of the rest of the war. William I, rather than profit from his advantage to obtain a treaty in his favour, preferred to continue the struggle. He raised an extraordinary aid,¹⁸ called on his vassals (1 September)¹⁹ and, finally, declared war on Brabant on 14 September 1386.²⁰ On 26 September, the order for mobilisation was sent to the towns of Brabant,²¹ whose militias set out at once.²² The duchess appeared personally at 's Hertogenbosch, which, given her age, demonstrates the importance to her of the expedition.²³

The siege of the town of Grave began at the start of October and lasted a score of days. As William I had had time to fortify and provision the town,²⁴ it resisted the assault valiantly. The siege lengthened. The militias grumbled against the nobles, complained of the passivity of the seneschal of Brabant and the castellan of Brussels, and threatened to raise the siege. On the other hand, the Bruxellois contingent undertook an assault on their own and almost captured the town. William I, surprised by the rapid counter-attack and by the size of the forces involved, preferred to negotiate. An armistice was proposed which the Brabançons accepted despite their stronger position in the field. On 21 October 1386, the duchess of Brabant and the duke of Guelders agreed to abide by the judgement of the regent of Hainault,²⁵ who, on 23 October, ordered that Joan should regain her rights over the town of Grave, that the prisoners, including Arnold of Hoemen, should be released, and that the latter should regain his fiefs.²⁶ Three days later, both sides accepted the judgment and the Brabançons returned home.²⁷

William I had no intention of abandoning the city. As soon as the enemy troops had left, he reinforced the town and refused to free his prisoners.²⁸ Joan protested to Albert of Bavaria who, rather than give military aid to the duchess, tried again to resolve the situation by diplomacy. The duchess, in disappointment, therefore turned to the duke of Burgundy. In February 1387, in exchange for his support, Joan ceded to Philip the Bold numerous fortresses and seigniories in Outre-Meuse, as well as rights of sovereignty over the duchy of Limburg.²⁹ This is often portrayed as the summit of Burgundian diplomacy, but

¹⁸ RAG, Account of Claes Liesser for 29 August 1386, f. 21.

¹⁹ RAG, Account of Claes Liesser for 29 August 1386, f. 64 v.; Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 230; Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. LIII.

²⁰ AGR, CC, 2.372, f. 117; Brandon, 'Chronodromon', p. 14.

²¹ AGR, CC, 2.372, f. 117.

²² On 28 September, the militia of Brussels departed for Grave (DD, III, p. 113) and on 3 October, those of Leuven set off (Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 230).

²³ Joan left Brussels on 25 September and did not return until 31 October (Quicke, 'Itinéraire', pp. 176–7).

²⁴ RAG, Account of Claes Liesser for 29 August 1386.

²⁵ Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 452.

²⁶ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. 125.

²⁷ Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 230; De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 278.

²⁸ RAG, Account of Claes Liesser for 29 August 1386, f. 74 et seq.

²⁹ BY, II, p. 663.

was in fact a political victory for Brabant. Joan, who at the time thought that the future of the duchy of Brabant would lie with the family of her nephew, had great difficulty in holding these distant territories. They cost her large sums of money for both administration and defence. By ceding them to the duke of Burgundy, the duchess resolved some of her financial difficulties and assured herself of an ally. Let us note in passing that this cession was an infringement of the *Joyeuse Entrée*. The Estates of Brabant apparently did not oppose it, which clearly supports my hypothesis.

With the arrival on the scene of the duke of Burgundy, the regent changed his attitude. At the start of March 1387, Joan, Philip the Bold and Albert of Bavaria met at Cambrai to organise themselves against the duke of Guelders.³⁰ Faced with this threat, William I agreed again to negotiate (26 March).³¹ As the discussion dragged on and the representatives of Guelders demanded an adjournment until 15 June, the duchess ordered the raising of troops at the end of May.³² The parley began again and rapidly concluded. William I had until 15 August to respect the judgment of 23 October 1386. Thereafter his pretensions to the three contested lands would be examined. Once more William I broke his word. Strengthened by English support, on 12 July 1387 he defied Charles VI, Philip the Bold and Joan.³³ The duke of Guelders immediately took the offensive. In August 1387 he ravaged the Maasland³⁴ while the Brabançon forces, commanded by Renaud of Fauquemont, regrouped near Sint-Oedenrode, Helmond and Eindhoven and tried to expel the Gueldrois from the duchy.³⁵

In September, Philip the Bold sent two hundred and twenty men-at-arms and some archers to the lands of Outre-Meuse.³⁶ They were sent to the three fortresses, which the duke of Guelders challenged.³⁷ The area was under the orders of Scheiffart of Merode, lord of Hemmersbach, who profited by the arrival of these reinforcements to take the offensive. During the night of 9 October 1387, a group of knights, under the command of William of la Tremouille and himself, left Waldfeucht.³⁸ In the small hours, they arrived in sight of Straelen. With thirty men-at-arms from Limburg, Scheiffart of Merode advanced on the town. They presented themselves as German knights come to reinforce the garrison. Having gained entry in the town by this ruse, they seized its control before the garrison awoke. A small English detachment attempted a defence but without success. After plundering the place, the attackers withdrew with booty and prisoners.

³⁰ Petit, *Ducs*, I, p. 403; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', pp. 178–9.

³¹ DD, III, p. 119; BY, II, p. 207.

³² Gachard, 'Trois', pp. 46–8.

³³ Douet D'Arcq, *Choix*, I, p. 78; Cartellieri, *Geschichte*, p. 128; AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 119.

³⁴ Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 230.

³⁵ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 126; CB, 6.410, 6.412–6.418.

³⁶ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 203; Plancher, *Histoire*, III, pp. 105, 569–70; De La Chauvelays, *Etude*, pp. 107–11; De La Tremouille, *Livre*, pp. 187–8.

³⁷ AGR, CC, 2.655, f. 134 r.–v.; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 48.

³⁸ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 48–51; DD, III, p. 126.

In mid-October, a successful raid was organised against Roermond. Sadly, we have scarcely any information on this subject.³⁹ Quicke and Laurent insist once more that Philip the Bold sent men-at-arms to the lands of Outre-Meuse, where he had possessions to defend, and not to the northern frontier of Brabant. Therefore, he acted from self-interest and not from solicitude. This judgment must be considered carefully. We know that the duke of Burgundy had already sent a contingent to the aid of Joan during the first siege of Grave, and as we shall see he would later send another to the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch to defend the northern frontier of the duchy. Thus, we may believe that in sending men-at-arms to the lands of Outre-Meuse, Philip the Bold was following strategic imperatives and not personal ambitions. This thesis is strengthened by the attitude of the duchess, who opposed the departure of these men. Had they been there only to defend the possessions of the duke of Burgundy, Joan would not have paid all their expenses so that they should remain and fight alongside Scheiffart of Merode.⁴⁰ On the northern frontier, other minor victories were achieved and the Brabançons were ready to begin a second siege of Grave. The duke of Guelders had once more to parley with his enemies. On 24 December 1387, an armistice was agreed until 10 June the next year.⁴¹

Both sides prepared to renew hostilities. Philip the Bold transferred eighty men-at-arms and forty archers from Lille to 's Hertogenbosch.⁴² Joan's caution was such that, during the siege of the castle of Gaasbeek (March–April 1388) the militia of 's Hertogenbosch were excused from service as they had to guard the northern frontier of the duchy. At the end of April 1388, all the urban contingents had returned home and Brabant was ready to launch an attack. The recent military successes and the approaching end of the truce renewed their bellicosity.⁴³ In May 1388, troops were gathered under the command of Renaud of Fauquemont and Henry (II) of Boutersem.⁴⁴ This army must have been impressive, as William I offered to surrender Grave and comply with the last agreement. The ducal council and the two general-captains accepted this offer, while certain militia commanders demanded that William I should defray the costs of the expedition. The negotiations turned hostile and the duke of Guelders preferred to sustain the siege.

At the start of June, the Brabançons once more besieged Grave, while William I retreated to Nijmegen with a large proportion of his knights, stationing the rest of his men-at-arms in garrisons along the frontier.⁴⁵ At Grave, the artillery was reinforced and some English strengthened the defence.⁴⁶ The

³⁹ DD, III, p. 126; De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 280; AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 121.

⁴⁰ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 203–4.

⁴¹ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. 137.

⁴² De La Chauvelays, *Etude*, pp. 111–14.

⁴³ Among the ducal counsel and the Estates of Brabant, there must have existed a group of 'nationalist' counsellors who disliked the aid of Philip the Bold and the king of France, and who preferred to win the war on their own so as to maintain the independence of the duchy (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 211).

⁴⁴ Gachard, 'Trois', p. 47.

⁴⁵ RAG, Account of H. van Steenberghe, 1388–1389, f. 57 r.–v.

⁴⁶ RAG, Account of H. van Steenberghe, 1388–1389, f. 10, 14 r.–v., 57.

enthusiasm of the Brabançons rapidly decreased as, despite violent fighting, the town held out. Morale was at its lowest and the troops again criticised their leaders. It was decided to completely encircle the town to cut off communication between Grave and Nijmegen and prevent supplies reaching the town. The Brabançons began to build a bridge, which would allow them to control both banks of the Meuse. The Gueldrois, aware of the danger, destroyed it before it was finished. The Brabançon leaders decided to cross the river by the bridge at Ravenstein. William I, having placed most of his men in garrisons, disposed of only three hundred *lances* as a mobile force. His tactical options were thus very limited.⁴⁷ When he heard that an enemy detachment was preparing to cross the river, not knowing where exactly the enemy would strike, he divided his small army into three groups. The first was sent to Ravenstein, the second towards Cuyk and the third remained with the duke at a place called *op die tersse*, ready to support either of the other detachments. This was very cunning of William I, as instead of using only half his army he could instead fight with two-thirds. Scouts were also sent along the river to observe the enemy's movements.

On 27 June, in the morning, the Brabançons headed for Ravenstein. Arriving at the bridge, they put to flight the small Gueldrois force charged with holding them back. Then, disobeying orders, they pillaged and devastated the surrounding area. The refugees, the scouts and the smoke of fires showed William I clearly where to strike. When the duke, who had rallied some of his men-at-arms en route, appeared before the Brabançons, there was panic. The massacre lasted almost two hours. A large number of Brabançons drowned in the Meuse while trying to escape the carnage. Most of the rest were killed or captured and seventeen banners were lost. By noon, it was all over.⁴⁸ When the survivors reached camp, there was a general rout as the Brabançons feared the advance of the enemy knights. It was now the duchess' turn to negotiate. On 29 June 1388, a new armistice was agreed until the 4 August.⁴⁹ Joan anticipated the end of the truce. On 28 July, the towns of Brabant were freed from their service in the host for the next three months, in exchange for a tax to support 1,200 *lances* and 400 crossbowmen.⁵⁰ However, these troops had not yet been deployed when, a few days after the armistice expired, the duke of Guelders and his men-at-arms invaded Brabant.⁵¹ Only a few garrisons protected the region⁵² and William I was free to ravage the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch for three days.⁵³

⁴⁷ DD, III, pp. 124–6; *Historia Gelriae*, pp. 64–6; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 165–80.

⁴⁸ Seventy-two men-at-arms were captured (RAG, Account of H. van Steenberghe, 1388–1389, II, f. 10).

⁴⁹ BY, II, p. 669.

⁵⁰ AGR, *Etats de Brabant*, supplément, 301 bis, f. 108–12 v.; Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 231. The latter is however mistaken when he writes that the Brabançon contingent was composed of *XII C glavien ende IX M voet cnechten*.

⁵¹ DD, III, p. 126, has this period of raids beginning on 9 August, although the duke was already in the field from 7 August (RAG, Account of H. van Steenberghe, 1388–1389, III, f. 5).

⁵² AGR, CB, 6.413, 6.415, 6.420, 6.425, 6.427, 6.431–6.432, 6.436, 6.440–6.447.

⁵³ DD, III, p. 126; RAG, Account of H. van Steenberghe, 1388–1389, III, f. 5. This *chevauchée* lasted only three days and not ten, as claimed by Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 219.

It was then that Charles VI, king of France, decided to avenge the insult that the duke of Guelders had given him in July 1387. In September 1388, the royal host set out for the duchy of Jülich via the difficult roads of Luxemburg. We will not expand on the events of this *chevauchée*, disastrous for the French, as it has already been studied in detail.⁵⁴ The king reached the borders on the duchy of Jülich in mid-September⁵⁵ and, on 22 September, the duke of Jülich submitted.⁵⁶ The royal army renewed its march towards Guelders. Charles VI established himself at Körrenzig while the duke of Burgundy did so at Lövenich.⁵⁷ The duke of Guelders and his men retired to their fortresses, having no desire to give battle against a greatly superior force. Inaction, bad weather and the harassment of the *linfars* made the situation very unpleasant for the French.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the duke of Jülich parleyed with his son and, after six days of discussions, William I agreed to surrender.⁵⁹ He excused himself to Charles VI and disavowed the letters of defiance, claiming that they were forgeries. As he could not give up the English alliance, he promised to warn the king of France one year in advance of any conflict.⁶⁰ As for the quarrel between Guelders and Brabant, it was submitted to the judgment of Charles VI. The king decided that a commission should examine the rights of each party and that Arnold of Hoemen should be given up to the king so that an enquiry could be set up to decide his fate.⁶¹

On 23 October 1390, a peace treaty was finally sealed. Each side promised to respect the peace and possessions of their neighbour. The situation of Grave was dealt with by acknowledging the status quo; the ownership of the town was formally in the duchess' hands, but the lord of Cuyk had to be enfeoffed with it before the 25 December following.⁶²

The destruction of the castle of Gaasbeek (March–April 1388)

Sweder (III) of Abcoude, lord of Gaasbeek, Putte and Strijn, was a powerful lord.⁶³ He profited from the duchess of Brabant's financial distress to have ceded to him some villages in the *mairie* of Rhode.⁶⁴ This was nothing extraor-

⁵⁴ Lindner, 'Der Feldzug der Franzosen'; Schaudel, *Campagne de Charles VI*.

⁵⁵ AGR, CC, 13.300, f. 37 v.; De Stavelot, p. 92; *Münstereifler Chronik*, p. 196; Petit, *Itinéraires*, p. 198.

⁵⁶ *Historia Gelriae*, p. 91; AGR, CB, 6.418–6.419; Hulshof, *Oorkonden*, pp. 51–9. Mary of Guelders, duchess of Jülich and of Guelders, approved and ratified the treaty on 30 September 1388 at Körrenzig (AGR, CB, 6.428).

⁵⁷ Petit, 'Séjours', p. 440; Petit, *Itinéraire*, p. 198.

⁵⁸ De Stavelot, *Chronique*, p. 92; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 265; *Historia Gelriae*, p. 94; *Chronique du bon duc Loys*, pp. 206–7; Kervyn De Lettenhove, *Istore*, II, p. 395.

⁵⁹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 266–8.

⁶⁰ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. 141.

⁶¹ Hulshof, *Oorkonden*, pp. 59–62; Van Doorninck, *Acten*, II, p. 193.

⁶² Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 571; Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. 171; AGR, CB, 6.553, 6.558–6.559, 6.565, 6.569, 6.608, 6.620, 6.639, 6.646.

⁶³ Wauters, *Gaesbeek, son château*; De Waha, 'Enghien (1364) et Gaesbeeck (1388)'; Boffa, 'Le différend entre Sweder d'Abcoude'.

⁶⁴ DD, III, p. 121; *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 113.

dinary. At the time, Joan's need was such that many of her goods were mortgaged.⁶⁵ However, the *mairie* of Rhode, a dependency of the *ammanie* of Brussels,⁶⁶ had strong links to the town of Brussels. The reaction of the Magistracy was swift. The *échevins*, under the direction of Everard t'Serclaes, complained to the duchess and reproached her for having violated the *Joyeuse Entrée*.⁶⁷ Joan had to give way. Hearing this news, the lord of Gaasbeek flew into a violent rage and, in the presence of his wife – Anne, daughter of Frederic count of Leyninge – and household, described Everard t'Serclaes as his worst enemy. On Tuesday 26 March 1388, William of Cleves, a bastard son of Sweder of Abcoude, Melys Uten Enghe, bailiff of the seigniorie of Gaasbeek, and some attendants laid an ambush on the road leading from Lennick to Brussels.⁶⁸ They captured the old man, mutilated him and abandoned him by the roadside. Traditionally the attack is placed at Vlesenbeek, at a place called the 'bad road' (*Qwadewegen*).⁶⁹ John of Stalle, doyen of Hal, and his clerk found the wounded man. They placed him in their wagon and brought him back to Brussels. The news of the attack spread through the town and crowds gathered to see the martyr. Spirits ran high and the Bruxellois cried out for vengeance. The duchess came in person to speak with Everard t'Serclaes but he could not answer questions in his pitiful state. The duchess tried vainly to calm the crowd. Helpless, she returned to her palace, which she left some days later, remaining at Tervuren throughout the duration of the punitive expedition.⁷⁰ Everard t'Serclaes died on 31 March 1388 and was interred in his domains at Ternat.⁷¹

On the very day of the attack against the *échevin*, at about five in the afternoon, the people left the town in arms with the intention of punishing the culprits.⁷² Nicolas of Ursene, *amman* of Brussels, commanded them personally.⁷³ Although the officer of justice had been the duke's representative in the administration since the fourteenth century, he was as much the issue of the lineages of Brussels as were the *échevins*, and was accustomed to advance the interests of the town as much as possible. The troop spent the night at Vlesenbeek and next morning marched rapidly to the castle and laid siege to it. The duchess, at the request of Brussels, sent her banner and some men-at-arms under the command of John (II) of Wittem, the seneschal of Brabant.⁷⁴ Brussels also asked the other towns of the duchy for support. Most of them agreed and rapidly sent reinforcements. The troops of Leuven arrived on 29 March,

⁶⁵ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 73–4; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*.

⁶⁶ Since 1334, the *ammanie* of Brussels had been divided into six *mairies*: Vilvorde, Campenhout, Rhode-Saint-Genèse, Asse, Merchtem and Capelle-au-Bois. The land of Gaasbeek was a seigniorie independent of the *ammanie*.

⁶⁷ BY, II, pp. 310–11; DD, III, p. 121; *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 113.

⁶⁸ BY, II, pp. 314, 670.

⁶⁹ Wauters, *Gaesbeek*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ From 31 March to 30 April (Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 185). Partially confirmed by two acts of the duchess given at Tervuren on 22 April 1388 (Wauters, *Environs*, I, pp. 145–6).

⁷¹ Wauters, *Environs*, I, p. 405.

⁷² BY, II, p. 315.

⁷³ BY, II, p. 671; BR, Mss, 10.247, f. 89.

⁷⁴ DD, III, p. 122; BY, II, p. 671; Mosmans, *De heeren*, pp. 35–9.

scarcely days after the start of the siege.⁷⁵ By contrast, the militia of 's Hertogenbosch retained their position, protecting the northern frontier of the duchy against any breach of the truce by the duke of Guelders.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the lord of Gaasbeek had gone in search of aid while his wife, aided by three captains, led the defence of the castle. Sweder of Abcoude gathered his relatives and men-at-arms at Diest, an enclave within Brabant not held as a fief by the duchess.⁷⁷ Thomas (II), lord of Diest, had good relations with Sweder of Abcoude, who would later ask him to witness his *urpheda*.⁷⁸ The 'enemies' of the town of Brussels could no doubt assemble there in safety. Although the besiegers had received reinforcements, they did not appear capable of taking the castle. However, the surrounding lands – a much easier target – were laid waste, the possessions of Sweder of Abcoude were confiscated and his officers dispossessed.⁷⁹ In the end it was decided to call on the miners of Liège, true professionals in the techniques of sapping fortifications. They must surely have played a decisive part, as the chroniclers tell us of the fall of the castle immediately after mentioning their participation in the siege.⁸⁰

The duchess' position was delicate. She was a helpless witness to a conflict between one of her closest counsellors and the towns of Brabant. Alarmed by the scale of events and by the ever-present risk on the northern frontier of the duchy, she wished to resolve the affair as swiftly as possible. She secretly contacted Sweder of Abcoude and an agreement was reached on 22 April.⁸¹ Joan even promised him an indemnity of 5,000 crowns to pay for his losses.⁸² Anne of Leyninge agreed to surrender the castle on condition that no attempt would be made against the lives or possessions of her or her followers.⁸³ This was granted and the lady of Gaasbeek took refuge at Braine-le-Château, one of her seigniories located in the county of Hainault. The Brabançons razed the fortress without delay and then, on 30 April 1388, returned to their homes.⁸⁴

The fall of the castle marked the end of the quarrel. The culprits were not otherwise troubled. The Bruxellois were satisfied with the destruction of the fortress, a most symbolic action. On 6 March 1389, the lord of Gaasbeek and his wife were reconciled with the town of Brussels. William of Cleves, who had quit the castle along with his father shortly before the siege began, was also not

⁷⁵ Divaeus, *Jaerboeken*, p. 191; Van Uytven, *Stadsfinanciën*, p. 107.

⁷⁶ DD, III, p. 122. The chronicler states that the truce had been broken at this time. Of this, we have no proof and the information is probably erroneous. Antwerp, 'temporarily' Flemish, also did not participate in this expedition.

⁷⁷ De Sturler, 'Un fief', pp. 156–7.

⁷⁸ BY, II, pp. 670–2.

⁷⁹ BY, II, p. 671; Wauters, *Gaesbeek*, p. 38.

⁸⁰ BY, II, pp. 319–20; DD, III, p. 122.

⁸¹ Wauters, *Gaesbeek*, p. 39.

⁸² Sadly for the lord of Gaasbeek and for his descendants, owing to the financial distress of the duchess of Brabant and her successors, this sum would still not be entirely paid by 1420 (AGR, CB, 9.785; BR, Mss, 5.707, f. 21; Wauters, *Gaesbeek*, p. 38).

⁸³ BY, II, p. 671.

⁸⁴ Divaeus, *Jaerboeken*, p. 191; Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 230.

troubled by the Bruxellois. He subsequently became bailiff and then castellan of Gaasbeek.⁸⁵ It seems that Sweder of Abcoude's power and good relations with the duchess allowed everyone to extricate himself at little cost.

The third war of Guelders (22 August 1397–9 June 1399)

On 1 July 1397, in a tavern at 's Hertogenbosch, an argument flared up between Watier of Overryn, an officer of the duke of Guelders, and his companions, with some townspeople.⁸⁶ The quarrel turned into a riot when other Gueldrois came to their compatriots' aid with war cries of 'Guelders! Guelders!' They fought strongly and seem to have expected the support of the inhabitants of the town. Instead the populace supported the side of Brabant. Many rioters were wounded or killed, and Watier of Overryn was arrested, tried and beheaded.⁸⁷ This rather small incident was to lead to a new war between the duchies of Guelders, Jülich and Brabant. William I protested and threatened the duchess with reprisals. On 3 August a meeting was arranged at Ravenstein, but no conclusion was reached as the ambassadors of Guelders were too demanding. On 22 August the duchess ordered a general mobilisation as a precaution.⁸⁸ At the end of the month, the duke of Guelders gathered an imposing army,⁸⁹ crossed the Meuse at Mook and at Niftrik and ravaged the surroundings of 's Hertogenbosch.⁹⁰ Reinforcements were sent, among whom we find John (II), lord of Wittem and seneschal of Brabant, Henry of Hornes, lord of Perwez, Thomas (II), lord of Diest, Renaud (II), lord of Schoonvorst, John, lord of Wezemaal, John (III), lord of Rotselaar, the lord of Berg⁹¹ and the lord of La Leck and Breda.⁹² There might have been an opportunity for a counter-attack while the enemy were in the narrow pass between 's Hertogenbosch and Engelen, but the enterprise was judged too risky and the defenders had to allow the invaders to advance further into the duchy. The Gueldrois intended to besiege Eindhoven. Warned by their spies, the Brabançons hastily dispatched there Paul of Haastrecht, *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch, with three hundred *lances*.⁹³ William I no longer dared attack

⁸⁵ AGR, Mss div., 24, f. 134 v., 136.

⁸⁶ Daris, *Histoire* . . . XV^e, pp. 35–8; Vaughan, *Philip*, pp. 100–1.

⁸⁷ It is interesting to note that according to the *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 434, these Gueldrois were not innocently present at 's Hertogenbosch but were to inform their lord if it were possible that the town might rally to the side of Guelders.

⁸⁸ Gachard, 'Trois', pp. 46–8.

⁸⁹ *Historia Gelriae*, p. 103.

⁹⁰ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 434; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 348; *Historia Gelriae*, pp. 102–3; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, pp. 42–43.

⁹¹ This was either Adam of Berg, lord of Limbricht, or Renier of Berg, the 'younger' (Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 659–61).

⁹² According to DD, III, p. 129. It is difficult to identify this personage as John (III) of Polanen, lord of La Leck and Breda, died on 11 August 1394. His only daughter, Joanna, did not marry Engelbert of Nassau until 1404. There was thus no lord of La Leck and of Breda at the time that concerns us (Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 715–16, 722–3).

⁹³ John, count of Megen and Hoop (Kerremans, *Etude*, p. 353).

the city, and revenged himself on the surrounding countryside.⁹⁴ Joan decided to end the matter quickly and sent a messenger with an offer of battle. The duke was to choose the date and place on condition that he retired into Guelders where the Brabançon army would meet him within five days. If he chose to remain in Brabant, he was to suspend his military operations and wait three days for the arrival of the enemy. William I, whether from fear or prudence, retreated into Guelders without accepting the combat. The Brabançons could only harass the retreat.⁹⁵

On the advice of her council, the duchess decided to attack the duchy of Jülich.⁹⁶ The Brabançons traversed the principality of Liège⁹⁷ and gathered close by Maastricht to carry the war to enemy territory directly. The army was imposing, as it included the militias of many leading towns of the duchy and a large number of carts.⁹⁸ Although the duchess seems to have wished to accompany her troops on the campaign, she remained unwillingly in the town so as to ensure her safety.⁹⁹ The host passed the night at Vlijtingen where they waited for the last stragglers. The next morning (11 September) the army was organised, captains and a marshal were chosen, and they penetrated into the duchy of Jülich. The Brabançons made for Aldenhoven, which, although fortified and garrisoned, was swiftly taken and destroyed.¹⁰⁰ After they continued to devastate the lands of the duchy, but problems of supply obliged the host to return to Maastricht. The duchess greeted them with honours. The expedition had lasted about ten days.¹⁰¹ On 22 September Joan returned to Brussels¹⁰² where she assembled her council, barons, knights, nobles and towns. They decided by common accord to attack the duchy of Jülich again next summer.¹⁰³

In 1396, the duke of Jülich and the town of Aachen had attacked the castle of Schoonvorst and the other possessions of Renaud (II).¹⁰⁴ This would draw this powerful lord and the principality of Liège into the conflict.¹⁰⁵ On 6 February 1398 a first alliance was concluded between Brabant and Liège.¹⁰⁶ On

⁹⁴ De Stavelot, *Chronique*, pp. 99–100; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, p. 43.

⁹⁵ AGR, CC, 2.384, f. 52, 57, 58, 61.

⁹⁶ Recall that at this time William I, duke of Guelders (1383–1402), was also William VII, duke of Jülich (1393–1402).

⁹⁷ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 434–5; D’Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 232.

⁹⁸ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 435. According to de Dynter, the Brabançon army numbered 40,000 combatants. This figure is of course fantastical (DD, III, p. 135).

⁹⁹ Quicke, ‘Itinéraire’, p. 209.

¹⁰⁰ *Historia Gelriae*, p. 103.

¹⁰¹ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 435–6; D’Outremeuse, *Chronique*, pp. 232–3.

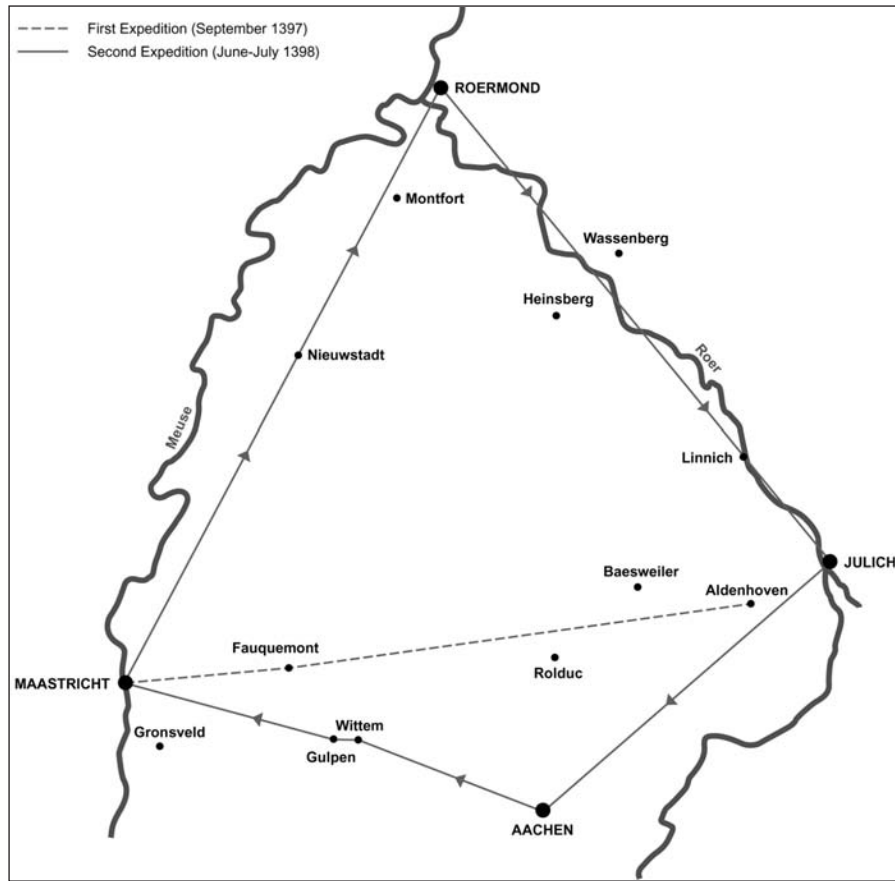
¹⁰² AGR, CC, 2.384, f. 56, 57.

¹⁰³ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, p. 830, dates this meeting after September 1397.

¹⁰⁴ The origin of this disagreement may have been a quarrel over the seigniories of Fauquemont and Montjoie, or the fact that Renaud (II), lord of Schoonvorst, had captured the brother of the duke, Renaud of Jülich, in 1394, and extracted a sizeable ransom from him (Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, p. LXXXVII; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 318–25, 382–3).

¹⁰⁵ Daris, *Histoire . . . XV^e*, pp. 35–38.

¹⁰⁶ DD, III, pp. 133–5; BY, II, pp. 357, 689–691; Fairon, *Regestes*, III, pp. 48–52; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, p. 831.



Map 8. The third war of Guelders (1397–1399)

26 March, at Malines, Joan, Philip the Bold and the Estates of Brabant met to decide how to pursue the war against the duke of Guelders.¹⁰⁷ On 19 April,¹⁰⁸ at Malines, an other alliance was sealed between the duke of Burgundy, the duchess of Brabant and John of Bavaria, elected of Liège.¹⁰⁹ Philip the Bold promised to send three hundred *lances* commanded by Waleran of Luxembourg, count of Saint-Pol.¹¹⁰ In exchange for this service the duke imposed certain conditions. The two other parties were to raise forces of equal size to his own. Joan and John of Bavaria could have no dealings with the duke of Guelders

¹⁰⁷ Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 45; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 212.

¹⁰⁸ Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 213, indicates that Joan arrived at Malines on 16 April but that if we follow the date given by the itinerary of Philip the Bold (Petit, *Itinéraires*, p. 273), the encounter did not take place until one or two days later. The date of the document confirms this hypothesis.

¹⁰⁹ Bonenfant, Bartier and Van Nieuwenhuysen, *Ordonnances*, p. 269.

¹¹⁰ Van Nieuwenhuysen, *Les finances*, p. 493.

without Philip's consent. Finally, the Brabançons and the Liégeois had to protect Philip's lands in Outre-Meuse, in exchange for which his fortresses would be open to them if need be.¹¹¹

In June 1398, the duchess warned her Liégeois allies that, according to the treaty of the 6 February, they must take the field at her side within eight days. The duchess established herself near Maastricht where she waited for her troops before entering the town. She remained there throughout the campaign. The host reached Vlijtingen, where their captains were appointed, passed Maastricht and crossed the Meuse. The Liégeois, commanded by John of Bavaria, took the road on 19 June 1398.¹¹² They headed for Gulpen where they joined the Brabançons and Burgundians.¹¹³ So as not to run short of supplies, the two armies remained divided and entered the duchy of Jülich by different routes. Pillaging and devastating the countryside, the two armies arrived separately before Nieuwstadt. The town fell on 24 June.¹¹⁴ They then made for Roermond, which was defended by 3,000 men-at-arms including more than 200 English archers.¹¹⁵ The duke of Guelders had retrenched himself at Montfort, whence he followed the progress of the siege of the town closely.¹¹⁶ The two armies established separate camps, the Liégeois between the Meuse and the Roer and the Brabançons and Burgundians on the other side of the river. Thus the town was completely encircled and the attack could begin. For three weeks the town was assaulted day and night.¹¹⁷ The fortifications were pierced by mechanical and pyrotechnic artillery¹¹⁸ while miners from Liège mined a large portion of the walls.¹¹⁹ All this brought no notable success. Meanwhile the Gueldrois did not remain inactive. They harassed the enemy in the field. Many Liégeois were killed while leading horses to pasture, and carts from the county of Looz bringing supplies were captured.¹²⁰

John of Bavaria and William I entered secretly into negotiations. On 16 July, the lord of Liège betrayed the Brabançons and Burgundians and made peace with his erstwhile enemy.¹²¹ The Liégeois immediately broke camp and returned

¹¹¹ Fairon, *Regestes*, III, pp. 46–7.

¹¹² *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 437; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 353; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 233.

¹¹³ AGR, CC, 2.437, f. 237 r.–v.

¹¹⁴ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 438; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 234; D'Outremeuse, *Geste*, p. 699; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 353.

¹¹⁵ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 439. This English troop should come as no surprise, as during the first war of Guelders English archers had been sent to help the duke. Also William I had always had good relations with Richard II (Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, IV, pp. LXXXV–LXXXVI; Sloet, 'De reis van Willem van Gulik'; Perroy, *The diplomatic correspondence of Richard II*.

¹¹⁶ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 234; D'Outremeuse, *Geste*, p. 699.

¹¹⁷ De Stavelot, *Chronique*, pp. 101–2; *Chronique du règne de Jean de Bavière*, p. 148; D'Outremeuse, *Geste*, p. 699; D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, pp. 234–5.

¹¹⁸ DD, III, p. 137; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, p. 43; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 353.

¹¹⁹ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 234; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 353–4; Gaier, 'Aux origines', p. 135.

¹²⁰ *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 439.

¹²¹ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, III, pp. 209–10; DD, III, p. 137; *Historia Gelriae*, p. 104.

home, without warning their allies. On the road, they met with a supply convoy sent from Maastricht to the Brabançon army, which they stopped and plundered.¹²² Abandoned and without supplies, the Brabançons and Burgundians raised the siege and retreated by way of the duchy of Jülich, which they devastated in passing. The town of Linnich, abandoned by its defenders, was pillaged and burned. Unfortunately for its assailants, they found much wine but little bread. The captains decided to head for Aachen, but Waleran of Luxemburg persuaded them to attack the town of Jülich.¹²³ The assault was fixed for the next day but, during the night, the Burgundian captain negotiated with the defenders, who ransomed themselves from pillage for the sum of 30,000 Rhenish *florins*. The Brabançons allowed him to keep this sum in recognition of his services. The army then made for Aachen where they hoped to supply themselves.¹²⁴ This was refused. The Brabançons threatened to attack the outskirts of the town if they were not allowed to buy provisions. The threat miscarried and they burnt several houses before retreating towards Wittem and Gulpen, where they found bread and wine. A supply convoy from Maastricht reached them. The army reached Maastricht but did not halt, continuing directly to the duchy. On 24 July the duchess returned to Brussels.¹²⁵ The campaign had lasted thirty-eight days.

Following the successful Brabançon campaign, William I appealed to the king of the Romans. He complained of the damage done by the Brabançons to his holdings, which were lands of the Empire, and to the outskirts of Aachen, a royal city. Wenceslas (II) of Bohemia promised the duke that he would take revenge by attacking Brabant the following summer. The duke of Burgundy, alarmed by these bellicose preparations, warned all his vassals. If the duchy were attacked he would at once intervene on the side of the duchess. The duke of Guelders, either fearing the power of Burgundy or doubting the word of his new ally, decided to end the matter. On 9 June, at Ravenstein, the duchess of Brabant and the dukes of Guelders and Jülich agreed to submit their differences to a jury of twelve judges and one overseer. The deliberations were to begin on

¹²² DD, III, p. 138; *Historia Gelriae*, pp. 104–5. The Liégeois sources give scant weight to this episode. They are content to indicate the conclusion of a separate peace and their return to their principality (De Stavelot, *Chronique latine*, p. 102; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 439). No mention is made of the attack on a Brabançon convoy. Let us also note the aplomb of D’Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 234, who pretends that it was the Brabançons that first abandoned the siege of the town. The Brabançons would not easily forgive this betrayal. In a document dated after 7 March 1408 and entitled: *Ce sont en parties les demandes et peticions mises en romans que fait monseigneur de Breban a monseigneur de Liège*, more than forty points of discord are enumerated. One of these concerns the payment of a penalty of 100,000 *écus* incurred by the towns and country of Liège and Looz for breaking the alliance that had been concluded between them and the duchess and her towns (AGR, Mss div., 5/D, f. 73).

¹²³ His father, Guy of Luxemburg, count of Saint-Pol, had died at the battle of Baesweiler. He wished to attack the town to avenge him (DD, III, pp. 138–9). Waleran himself had been present at the battle and was captured. We find him once more on the Brabançon side during the first war of Guelders.

¹²⁴ *Historia Gelriae*, p. 105.

¹²⁵ AGR, CC, 2.386, f. 16, 17.

15 August at Ravenstein.¹²⁶ On the same day, William I sealed a treaty of peace and friendship with Joan, and, notably, promised to prevent any damage being done to her subjects on either side of the Meuse, particularly the inhabitants of Millen, Gangelt and Waldfeucht.¹²⁷ By common accord it was decided that the town of Grave and all its dependencies should, shifting from Brabant, be held in fief by William, bastard son of the duke of Guelders, in the same way as the town had been held previously by the lords of Cuyk.¹²⁸ The treaties agreed between the duchess of Brabant and the dukes of Guelders and Jülich angered the duke of Burgundy. He had not been invited to the negotiations, contrary to the agreement of 19 April 1398, and had just spent more than 12,000 crowns on new preparations for war.¹²⁹ Philip the Bold would later treat separately with William I.¹³⁰

Minor conflicts (1356–1406)

Besides the major military operations that we have just reviewed, there were numerous other actions on a smaller scale: for example, the abortive and undeclared war between the duchy of Brabant and the counties of Hainault and Holland (1372–75);¹³¹ the Brabançon expeditionary force under Henry (II) of Boutersem, lord of Bergen-op-Zoom, that helped Louis of Male to defend Termonde against an attack by the rebellious people of Ghent (1380);¹³² or the tensions between the duchy of Brabant and the principality of Liège in 1384.¹³³ Expeditions of this kind were numerous but too poorly documented to be analysed in detail. Furthermore, we have considered Wenceslas only in his role as duke of Brabant and of Limburg. We should not forget that he was also duke of Luxemburg, which principality has its own political and military history. He also carried on an active military career there: in 1358, he went to war against the bishop of Verdun; in 1363, he organised an expedition against the *grandes compagnies* which were plundering the outskirts of Metz; in 1365, he fought in Alsace; in 1368, he led an expedition against the *companies*, which were ravaging the duchy of Luxemburg under the orders of Petit-Meschin;¹³⁴ in 1375 and 1377, he attacked the *companies*, which were raiding between the Meuse and the Rhine, etc. Although these various operations did not concern the duchy, it was not uncommon to find Brabançons among the troops from Luxemburg. In 1375, for example, the magistrate of Leuven ordered some of his archers to help

¹²⁶ BY, II, pp. 691–3.

¹²⁷ AGR, CC, 131, f. 16; CC, 154, f. 49.

¹²⁸ AGR, CB, 7.140.

¹²⁹ *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 125.

¹³⁰ Poncelet, *Cartulaire*, 5, p. 19; AGR, CB, 7.170–7.171.

¹³¹ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 224–8.

¹³² This was an official aid, as the duke of Brabant reimbursed them for their losses during this expedition (AGR, CB, 5.733; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 304–5, 309, 338).

¹³³ Troops under the orders of the *drossard* of Tirlmont were stationed along the frontier of Liège (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 78).

¹³⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 17.

Wenceslas against the *grandes compagnies*.¹³⁵ Wenceslas also played other parts, such as member of the *Landfriede* or as vassal of the king of France. In 1378, owing to a decision of the sworn members of the *Landfriede*, a hundred men-at-arms were sent to Rolduc, of whom the duke of Brabant furnished twenty-five.¹³⁶ In 1359, Wenceslas came to the aid of the Dauphin against the citizens of Paris.¹³⁷ In 1382, he had to go to Flanders in the service of the king of France though he arrived too late to take part in the battle of Rozebeek.¹³⁸ For this reason, he was sometimes involved in conflicts having nothing to do with the duchy but in which many Brabançons took part through feudal obligation or desire for gain.¹³⁹

The duke himself was not the only person responsible for the state of war or of disorder that reigned in the duchy. There were also other factors that disturbed the peace and public order. The influence of the frequent private wars such as that between Henry of La Leck and Henry of Boutersem in 1394–95¹⁴⁰ should not be neglected. The military obligations of the Brabançon nobles towards lords other than the duke of Brabant are another matter. For example, in 1297, the lord of Diest, the lord of Walhain, the lord of Malines and the lord of Rotselaar were all vassals of the count of Flanders and had to serve him in case of war.¹⁴¹ Finally, in an era when war was a business, the desire for gain drove certain Brabançons towards adventure throughout the century. This is why they took part in the battle of Courtrai (1302).¹⁴² They served in Scotland alongside Edward III (1327).¹⁴³ They helped Louis of Male against the towns of Ghent and Ypres (1348)¹⁴⁴ and again in 1382.¹⁴⁵ They fought alongside the English in 1355. They accompanied the duke of Lancaster in October 1359 when the latter was ravaging the Somme.¹⁴⁶ Or, in 1396, braving the duchess' interdiction, they accompanied the count of Holland in a larger expedition to Frisia.¹⁴⁷ In these preceding situations, we can, paradoxically, find a large proportion of the armed forces of Brabant in combat while the duchy remained in peace.

¹³⁵ AVL, 4.999, f. 76; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 217.

¹³⁶ AGR, CB, 5.370; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 237, 283.

¹³⁷ *Chronique des quatres*, p. 80; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 50.

¹³⁸ AGR, CB, 5.922, 5.925; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 338.

¹³⁹ These diverse conflicts have not been the subject of detailed study as the role played by the Brabançons was only auxiliary. What is more, we would have to plunder a large number of archives to gather even a little information.

¹⁴⁰ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 826–7.

¹⁴¹ Warnkönig and Gheldolf, *Histoire*, II, pp. 516–18.

¹⁴² Tourneur-Nicodeme, 'Quelques seigneurs brabançons'.

¹⁴³ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 40–1.

¹⁴⁴ Le Muisit, *Chronique*, p. 205.

¹⁴⁵ De Dixmude, *Merkwaerdige*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁶ Le Bel, *Vraies*, II, p. 293; Rogers, *War*, pp. 297, 401.

¹⁴⁷ Janse, *Grenzen*, p. 263.

3

Assessment of Half a Century of War

The place of warfare in the history of Brabant

The reign of Joan covers half a century. This period was troubled by a series of major conflicts and various military operations of lesser importance. If we include only the most important conflicts, twenty years of Joan's reign were disturbed by war. If we also count the minor operations, a state of war existed for more than two-thirds of the period. Wenceslas (1356–83), as duke of Brabant and Limburg, as duke of Luxemburg, or in a private capacity, took part in a military expedition almost every year. During Joan's reign as a widow (1384–1406), the situation was scarcely different. Although she undertook no offensive operation, the duchy was nevertheless at war during ten years out of twenty-two, or almost one year in two. Warfare was thus an endemic phenomenon in fourteenth-century Brabant and we cannot neglect its influence on society.

We must however keep this state of 'permanent warfare' in perspective. With the exception of the levying of extraordinary aids and of general mobilizations, the nature of these conflicts was such that the whole of the duchy did not suffer at the same time. They were limited both in space and in time. The border areas such as the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch, the towns situated around the borders of the principality of Liège, the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse were most often subject to the ravages of war. The duration of military operations was naturally less than that of the state of war: three weeks in 1332, just over two months in 1334, about twenty days in 1386, just over three weeks in 1388, ten days in 1397 and thirty-eight in 1398. This relative brevity is explained as much by economic factors – in an age of paid service, it was very expensive to keep an army on a war footing for several months – as by practical considerations – it was a great deal easier to fight in good weather than during the rigors of winter.

Of course, this does not mean that between the great expeditions, usually commanded by the duke or his officers, the land was at peace. We observe a series of sudden blows and revenge attacks between petty lords or rival towns, profiting from the state of war to settle old scores or seeking to enrich themselves quickly. This type of military activity, momentary, small-scale, recurrent, without great effect on the general progress of the conflict, but nonetheless terrible for the populace, has been called *guerre guerroyante*. The constant presence of war in daily life is easily explicable. Unlike modern conflicts, which tend to begin and end at clearly defined moments, medieval wars were much more diffuse. The peace treaties seemed more like the armistices or suspensions

of fights necessary for the preparation of new offensives. The technical means available were often insufficient to bring an enemy down, and in the absence of a decisive confrontation, the war would drag on and on. Hence, we observe the dukes of Guelders troubling the life of the dukes of Brabant over several decades, despite the numerous treaties concluded between them.

The causes of war

Although the duchy was often at war, the duke of Brabant did not undertake any offensive action. The war of the succession of Brabant and the second and third wars of Guelders were purely defensive and intended to defend the rights of the duke over territory coveted by a neighbouring ruler. In the same spirit, Wenceslas often found himself at war with local lords so as to affirm his rights over recently acquired territories such as the seigniories of Fauquemont or of Wassenberg. In other cases, the duke wished to protect Brabançon merchants on the commercial routes that linked the towns of Brabant to the large German cities. The war against Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg, the *chevauchée* of Jülich and the destruction of the castle of Hemmersbach should be placed in this context. The repression of brigandage in the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse was not only an economic matter. These actions were part of the much larger concept of maintaining public order. The ruler, the guarantor of the peace, had to be able to keep order and defend his lands and his subjects. If he appeared incapable of this, the foundations of his authority and power would thereby be weakened. The expedition against Sweder of Abcoude is a special case. This was a private conflict in which the duchess found herself embroiled against her will. Let us note that although the attitude of the lord of Gaasbeek may seem excessive, it was not at all out of character with the arrogant and violent conduct of other great lords of the fourteenth century who had the right to give justice in their own lands. The motives that prompted Wenceslas to undertake a war against the principality of Liège are not clear, but it seems that he did not initiate military operations. Finally, the only war of an offensive character and not linked directly to the interests of Brabant was the first war of Guelders, which was in theory undertaken mainly for simple family reasons.

The different phases of the military history of the duchy

The troubled reign of Joan is divided into five clearly distinct phases:

The war of the succession of Brabant (1356–1357): during this conflict, Wenceslas appears to have been most indecisive. The defence of Brabant seems not to be his highest priority. It is likely that, disappointed by the attitude of the Brabançons, who had imposed upon him the oath of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, and being directly attacked by his relatives by marriage, he was probably regretting leaving the duchy of Luxemburg where his power was much better established. In any case, he was only nineteen years old. His youth no doubt accounts for his military and diplomatic errors. On the other side, Joan adopted a radically

different approach. She ably assumed the role of head of state and was willing to oppose her husband in the interests of the duchy. Both the towns and the nobility adopted an ambiguous posture during the second Flemish invasion. The Estates were violently opposed to the negotiations undertaken by Wenceslas; the great towns of the duchy did not hesitate to surrender swiftly and many representatives of noble families of the duchy recognised Louis of Male as their legitimate ruler. The death of John III and the crisis of succession that followed from it are the main reasons for the disarray that seems to have afflicted the seats of power in Brabant at the time. This war was a real test of the unity of the 'nation'.

Wenceslas before Baesweiler (1357–1371): Wenceslas established himself at the head of Brabant. To this end, he profited remarkably from the opposition between the patricians and the plebeians. He took advantage of the low profile kept by the towns and hence the Estates to impose his power. His military activities were intense and allowed him to extend the influence of Brabant towards Cologne. Contrary to the claims of certain historians, I do not believe that Wenceslas was acting in the interests of the House of Luxemburg to the detriment of Brabant.¹ Brabant was the most powerful principality of the Low Countries. It was therefore not in the interest of Wenceslas and his successors for this territory to be lost to their inheritance. What is more, his reign was just beginning, and he probably did not expect his marriage to be childless. Finally, the wars that these acquisitions entailed were fought by Brabançon troops. This would not have been the case had the combatants not regarded them as future Brabançon territories. There is therefore no room for such a supposition.

Wenceslas after Baesweiler (1371–83): after 1371, Wenceslas had enormous financial difficulties. To judge the magnitude of the catastrophe represented by Baesweiler, it suffices to recall the sum of the ducal debts after the defeat. They exceeded one million two hundred thousand *moutons*.² Also, during his captivity, the Estates had organised their return to the political scene. They would become an unavoidable political partner. Then the duke found himself paralysed both politically and financially. Thereafter, Wenceslas' military ambitions were thwarted and military enterprises were very rare during this period. The only major conflict concerned the principality of Liège and does not seem to have involved the full military forces of the duchy. The difficult situation in which Wenceslas found himself was not without influence on the Low Countries as a whole. In his work on the Low Countries on the eve of the Burgundian period, Quicke speaks of an 'entente cordiale' between the three principal rulers of the region, the duke of Brabant, the count of Flanders and the *bail* of Hainault, Holland and Zeeland.³ If this appears surprising, it is easily explained, at least for the first two of the protagonists. Louis of Male had tremendous difficulties in maintaining his authority over Flemish Flanders,

¹ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 68–9; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 16.

² Estimated by Dubois after AVL, 6.486 (Dubois, 'La bataille', I, pp. 32–45). For comparison, Edward III was to receive 3,000,000 *écus* ransom for the French king after the battle of Poitiers, an amount nearly ten times the English Crown's annual revenues at the beginning of Edward's reign.

³ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 221–38, 386–94.

while the duke of Brabant simply lacked the means to make war. Contrary to the old adage, this peace abroad was a simple consequence of internal disturbances.

The widow Joan (1383–1404): the principal characteristic of the reign of Joan was the complete absence of offensive warfare. The reason was simple. Joan involved herself less than her husband did in the *Landfriede*; she was no longer concerned with the political development of Luxemburg,⁴ and she was scarcely interested in military glory. It was the troublesome William I, duke of Guelders, who bore the responsibility for the two great wars of this period. Since the economic situation of the duchy was not yet healthy, Joan did not hesitate to call upon her powerful neighbour, the duke of Burgundy, to reinforce the army of Brabant by Burgundian contingents. The rapprochement between Joan and Philip the Bold, which would perhaps not have been so easy were it not for the involuntary aid of the duke of Guelders, was a political development of the first importance. Its repercussions would be felt not only in the succession of Brabant but also in the rest of the Low Countries, since this began the control of the House of Burgundy over the principalities of the region.⁵

Anthony, *ruward* of Brabant (1404–1406): the military activities of the governor of Brabant were much reduced. We observe no major conflicts during this period. It may be that no opportunity presented itself, but given his bellicose character, it seems unlikely. Scarcely was he duke of Brabant before he made war upon the duke of Guelders (1407).⁶ During his years as governor, it must have been the prospect of succeeding Joan that made him control himself. It was vital not to make a bad impression in front of the three Estates when in a short time they would be choosing a successor to the aging duchess. This did not prevent him from vigorously opposing the town of Brussels in 1406 in a matter concerning one of his officers, the *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch.⁷

Territorial accounting

During the fourteenth century, the duchy was, with the county of Flanders, one of the most powerful principalities of the Low Countries. The territories under the duke's control were made up of the duchy of Brabant proper, the duchy of Limburg, the lands of Outre-Meuse and many small domains enclaved within the principality of Liège, the duchy of Jülich and in the direction of Cologne.⁸ During the half-century of this study, Brabant underwent major territorial

⁴ We find an exception, however, in 1384, in the dowerlands of Luxemburg. The duchess ordered her officers to offer military aid to the seneschal of the duke of Luxemburg. This operation was purely local and did not concern the duchy of Brabant at all (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 102).

⁵ I would like to stress that I disagree with the judgements of Laurent and Quicke. The relations between the duke of Burgundy and the duchess of Brabant were on an equal footing. According to the events, each found their own advantage, each sought to profit from the other and both had to resolve themselves to make concessions.

⁶ Boffa, 'L'expédition d'octobre 1407'.

⁷ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 478–9.

⁸ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 43–111.

changes. The war of the succession of Brabant was the conflict that most affected the territorial integrity of the duchy. It brought with it the loss of the seigniorship of Malines, and despite the efforts of the Brabançons, this region would never return to Brabant. The town of Antwerp and some other villages were held in fief from the duke by the count of Flanders. On the death of Margaret of Male, Anthony of Burgundy became the lord of Antwerp (27 April 1405).⁹ Once he had become duke of Brabant (1406), the seigniorship of Antwerp would be gradually reintegrated into the duchy.¹⁰ The seigniorship of Turnhout had been mortgaged by John III to Mary of Brabant and Renaud III, duke of Guelders.¹¹ In order to keep Mary of Brabant and her husband from an alliance with her sister Margaret of Brabant, on 25 July 1356 this mortgage was changed into a fief.¹² Eventually, on 1 March 1399, as Mary of Brabant died without issue, the territory rejoined the duchy. For diplomatic reasons, Joan and Wenceslas gave the castle, the town and the land of Heusden in fief to William V, count of Holland (29 March 1357).¹³ In 1364, they tried in vain to negotiate with Albert of Bavaria, regent of Holland, for their return to Brabant.¹⁴ Only from 16 October 1420 would the town once again be Brabançon. On this date, the Brabançons captured it during the war that pitted Jacqueline of Bavaria and the Estates against John of Bavaria.¹⁵ During the second war of Guelders, the town of Grave was rapidly occupied by the Gueldrois (1386). Although the conflict that followed had among its principal goals the recovery of this town, it would remain under the influence of Guelders. Its lords had however to hold it in fief from the duke of Brabant. Only at the end of the reign of John IV would this town be once again reunited with Brabant.¹⁶

In fact, more than the fortunes of war, it was the dangerous policy of mortgages undertaken by the dukes to finance their military expeditions that threatened the integrity of the territory of Brabant. Indeed, in order to be able to struggle effectively against the duke of Guelders, Joan had to resign herself to ceding eight mortgages between 1386 and 1393 and seven between 1397 and 1398.¹⁷ Fortunately, during the government of Anthony, under pressure from the Estates, some of these would be recovered.¹⁸ The duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse were also not spared. Limburg (c. 1357), Rolduc (1357), Wassenberg (1371), Dalhem (1386), Fauquemont (1388), etc. would also be mortgaged.¹⁹ The majority of these domains fell at last into the hands of Philip

⁹ Prims, *Geschiedenis*, V, pp. 168–9.

¹⁰ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 48–9.

¹¹ DD, II, p. 591. The mortgage (*engagère*) was a new and less rigorous form of the *mort-gage* (*mortuum vadium*, *dood pand*) of the preceding centuries. It was in common use at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.

¹² BY, II, pp. 482–5.

¹³ AGR, Mss div. 1/A, f. 10; Van Mieris, *Groot*, II, p. 867; BY, II, p. 537.

¹⁴ AGR, CC, 2.351, f. 67 v.

¹⁵ DD, I, pp. 76–8; III, p. 403.

¹⁶ Alliance not dated but after 24 May 1425 (AGR, CC, 12, f. 328).

¹⁷ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 73–5.

¹⁸ Tourneur, 'Répercussions', pp. 57–74.

¹⁹ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 76–89.

the Bold and thus, when his son became duke of Brabant, they returned to the duchy.²⁰

In February 1387, negotiations began at Tournai, which ended with the cession to Philip the Bold of several fortresses and seigniories in the lands of Outre-Meuse and rights of sovereignty over the duchy of Limburg.²¹ I think that these acquisitions, which are often presented as a high point of Burgundian diplomacy, should rather be considered as a victory for Brabant. The fact was that Joan, who knew at the time that the duchy of Brabant would pass to her nephew's family, had many difficulties in keeping the outlying territories under her control. They cost large sums of money both for their upkeep and for their defence. By ceding them to the duke of Burgundy, the duchess solved some of her financial problems and assured herself of a firm ally. Would Philip the Bold have insisted so strongly that the king of France go to war against the duke of Guelders had he not had possessions to defend in the area? The chronicler of the *Geste de Liège* was not mistaken in writing:

The duke of Guelders, noble as a lion,
Who had done great harm
To the duke of Burgundy, when he burned
The land of Limburg.²²

The territorial gains were scarce. They include only the acquisition of the seignior of Fauquemont, of the land of Wassenberg and the lands of Millen, Gangelt and Waldfeucht. It should be noted, however, that from a strategic point of view it was particularly important that these territories should remain Brabançon. The balance of territories was thus not as bad as it is usually portrayed. Only the seigniories of Malines and of Antwerp and the town of Grave were lost through misfortune in war. The other domains were voluntarily given up. Apart from the seignior of Malines, they were all eventually reunited with the duchy. It would be unjust to criticise Joan and Wenceslas for their policy of mortgages since the other dukes – particularly Anthony – were also much given to abuse of the same procedure. The defeat at Baesweiler is clearly therefore a key moment in the history of Brabant. What would have happened had Wenceslas not lost the battle, or if he had simply not been captured? In view of the first part of his reign, it seems likely that he would have continued to strengthen the position of Brabant in the area. The unfavourable judgment of historians on his reign as duke would probably have been very different.

²⁰ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 93–9.

²¹ BY, II, p. 663.

²² Duc de Guerle, à lion noble,
Qui avoit fait j grant despit
A duc de Borgongne, quant il ardit
En la terre dit de Lemborch . . . (D'Outremeuse, *Geste de Liège*, p. 706).

4

Art of War, Strategy and Tactics

Introduction

The military system of a State is accounted for by various factors – the organisation of its society, the nature of its economy, the available resources, the structure of government, its administration, its technological level and so on. The way in which the State undertakes and conducts a war follows from the same factors. For this reason, the progress of military operations obeys logic and rules proper to the time. The task of the historian is to understand these broad principles so as to be able to interpret events without falling into the grave but all too easy sin of anachronism. Contamine has perfectly captured the method of warfare in the Middle Ages:

In its commonest form, a medieval war consisted of a series of sieges, accompanied by a multitude of skirmishes and pillagings, in addition to which there were a few major battles, solemn encounters, whose relative rarity was some compensation for their frequently bloody character.¹

Following the work of Oman, Erben, Verbruggen and their successors, we know that the military commanders of medieval times not only possessed some notions of strategy and tactics, but also that they attempted to conduct their military operations in accordance with these principles.² Here, I will analyse the example of Brabant in the second half of the fourteenth century. This should allow us to improve our still fragmentary knowledge of the art of war in the Middle Ages.³ The records at our disposal are abundant. Unfortunately, few of them are directly concerned with our subject. The administrative sources are of little use, while the two great narrative sources, the *Brabantsche Yeesten* and the chronicle of Edmond de Dynter, are political histories rather than accounts intended to display the warrior prowess of the dukes. Jan van Heelu, famous for his poem on the battle of Worringen, had no direct successor. For Brabant in the

¹ 'Dans sa forme la plus courante, la guerre médiévale était faite d'une succession de sièges, accompagnés d'une multitude d'escarmouches et de dévastations, à quoi venaient se surajouter quelques combats majeurs, quelques rencontres solennelles, dont la relative rareté venait compenser le caractère souvent sanglant' (Contamine, *La guerre*, p. 207).

² Oman, *A History of the Art of War*; Erben, *Kriegsgeschichte des Mittelalters*; Verbruggen, *De krijgskunst in West-Europa*; Verbruggen, *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe*.

³ We say 'fragmentary' since although the examples of France and England are becoming well known, we are still in the dark about other European regions.

fourteenth century, there exists no such chronicler as Jean Froissart or Jean le Bel, describing minutely the 'national' military operations. Fortunately, such information as I have been able to obtain is sufficiently instructive for us to attempt a first synthesis on the subject.

The art of war during the second half of the fourteenth century

The theory

In the Middle Ages, strategic thinking had not completely died out. Whether by the survival, in copies or translations, of ancient works (Frontinus, Vegetius, etc.), or the production of new works (Pierre Dubois, Christine de Pisan, Jean de Bueil, etc.) the men of war in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had the opportunity to study and reflect on military theory. However, we have not found any mention of the use, directly or indirectly, of one of these works by the dukes or duchess. Although two French translations of the *De Re Militari* of Vegetius, dating respectively from c. 1360 and c. 1380, exist in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, the history of the manuscripts shows that they belonged to a prince not of the House of Leuven but rather to the House of Burgundy.⁴ I have been unable to determine who ordered or who possessed the Latin version of that same work currently preserved in Prague, but copied in Brussels in 1409.⁵ However, I can at least affirm that this classic of military theory was not unknown in the region. No Brabançon document mentions any theoretical work composed in the duchy or by a Brabançon. We know only of the translation into Middle Dutch of the *Ordène de Chevalerie* made by Hein of Aken, priest of Corbeek-Dyle.⁶ Only certain narrative sources of the era contain more than detailed descriptions of military campaigns. Here we find analyses on the events that they describe and advice for the reader. The reading of them would have been most instructive, and not only to the historian. Nothing, however, indicates that these chronicles were so used by the men of war.

The grand strategy

It is impossible effectively to defend or attack a vast territory or to lead an army to victory without, by one means or another, conscientiously planning and organising these operations. This I have decided to call 'grand strategy': the military thinking regarding the general development of a campaign and the overview of military operations.⁷ The grand strategy is observed in major conflicts such as the war against the two great coalitions (1332 and 1334), the

⁴ BR, Mss, 11.048, 11.195; Meyer, 'Les anciens traducteurs français de Végèce'; Richardot, *Végèce et la culture militaire*.

⁵ Allmand, 'Did', pp. 136–7.

⁶ Cuvelier, *La formation*, p. 181.

⁷ Even though such a specialist as Lot holds that grand strategy did not exist in the Middle Ages, this position is now untenable. However, there is still no consensus among different historians as to the fundamental notion of grand strategy, strategy and tactics (Lot, *L'art*, II, p. 449; Contamine, *La guerre*, pp. 375–7; Gillingham, 'Richard I and the Science of War'; Bennett, 'The Development of Battle Tactics'; Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*).

war of the succession of Brabant (1356–57), the second and third wars of Guelders (1385–90 and 1397–99) rather than in the short punitive expeditions or the conflicts limited to a single theatre of operations, such as the destruction of the castle of Hemmersbach (1366). There is no need to describe these conflicts in detail. The interested reader need only consult the accounts of the events of these campaigns. Instead, we shall review and analyse some guiding principles that influence this grand strategy.

Medieval principalities were geographical entities that were difficult to defend. The protection of a territory made up of many domains of which some were enclaves within foreign or enemy lands was not easy to organise. In 1334, while John III was trying to raise the siege of Rolduc, which was besieged by the coalition forces, he and his men-at-arms were placed in a perilous situation by the surprise attacks of the bishop of Liège against Maastricht and of the count of Looz, who destroyed the bridges across the Meuse. They found themselves practically cut off from Brabant. John III had to react rapidly. He resigned himself to the loss of the town and managed to cut a path to Maastricht. The worst was thus avoided.⁸ Although the principalities of the Low Countries were much smaller than the neighbouring kingdoms, wars were sometimes carried on in theatres of operation very distant from one another. Thus in 1386, while William I and his men-at-arms ravaged the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch, a simultaneous attack against Brabançon holdings situated in the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse was ordered.⁹ In 1356, the liberation of the southern part of the duchy was organised with men-at-arms gathered in the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse, with the troops of northern Brabant and with those faithful to the cause who remained in the towns conquered by the enemy.¹⁰ This distance, in an age when maps scarcely existed and means of communication were still rudimentary, required good coordination of the different armed forces in order to gain full advantage from these multiple attacks.

The general political context, which in these regions was highly complex, often influenced the progress of military operations. The long dispute between John III and Renaud, lord of Fauquemont is a good example. On the one hand, we have a robber baron abusing his strength, and on the other, a powerful ruling prince. The brigand should have been swiftly brought down and his fortress raised. However, John III had the greatest difficulty in bringing this about, as the political and economic complexities were so great that the actions of the counts of Holland and of Hainault, of Guelders, of Jülich and of Luxemburg and the archbishop of Cologne all interfered with the proper course of military operations and granted a respite to Renaud.¹¹ Similarly, in 1356, when Louis of Male tried to resolve *manu militari* a 'family matter', he obtained the aid of the count of Namur and the bishop of Liège. While this coalition was less numerous than

⁸ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 102–41, 145–69; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 78–183.

⁹ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 146–8.

¹⁰ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', pp. 104–5, 107.

¹¹ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 48–51, 67–70, 76–8, 90–3, 162–4; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 66, 150–1.

those of 1332 or 1334, the alliance was much stronger and thus much more dangerous. This allowed the count of Flanders to attack Brabant on four fronts: along the Ninove–Brussels road, on the Scheldt before Antwerp, on the frontiers of Namur (from Nivelles to Jodoigne) and on the frontiers of the lands of Liège from Hannut to Saint-Trond.¹² During the same conflict the pope, the emperor and the kings of France and England also became involved. Again, throughout the second war of Guelders (1385–1390), William I acted in concert with the English while Joan was supported first by the duke of Burgundy and then by the king of France. The game of alliances rapidly transformed a local conflict into a part of the Hundred Years' War. Diplomacy was more and more to the fore and conflicts rarely remained contained, as rather than two lords opposing each other it was a conflict between two rulers and their allies.

Provisioning and strategy

The close links between provisioning and strategy are an aspect of the art of war that is often passed over in silence.¹³ However, unless regularly supplied with nourishment and munitions, the combatant swiftly loses his effectiveness. This organisational problem was particularly evident during the third war of Guelders (1397–99). In September 1397, during the first *chevauchée* in Jülich, the Brabançons were insufficiently provisioned. As they could not find ample nourishment from the countryside, they had to content themselves for two or three days with fruit plucked from the trees. In preparation for the second attack, the Brabançons and the Liégeois, at that time allies against the duke of Guelders, agreed beforehand on the route to follow. They were to cross the duchy of Jülich separately so as to keep a clear area in which to find sufficient rations and forage.¹⁴ Later in the same campaign, the troops of Brabant were once more deprived of supplies and had precipitately to raise the siege of Roermond. The Brabançons seized food from the people in order to survive. Even so, they only escaped starvation because the people of Maastricht supplied them.¹⁵

Naturally, supply convoys were a choice target. While the troops of John II were laying siege to Dordrecht, although the town lay only a few tens of kilometres from the northern frontier of Brabant, the enemy managed to prevent supplies from reaching the Brabançon camp. The shortage became so severe that bread was sold for twenty times its normal price. The duke had no choice but to raise the siege rather than see his army decimated by hunger.¹⁶ Cutting an enemy's lines of supply was clearly part of the strategy of the time. Regarding a similar episode, does not Edmond de Dynter take care to point out that *ainsi que*

¹² Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 95.

¹³ Although this is an aspect of grand strategy, I have decided to deal with this subject separately.

¹⁴ This episode among others shows clearly the difficulties of living off the land during a *chevauchée*. This aspect is underestimated by Rogers who sees in this division into columns only a means to cause more destruction (Rogers, 'Edward III', pp. 272, 280).

¹⁵ AGR, CC, 2.437, f. 237 r.–v., 255 v., 258; DD, III, pp. 131–40; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 435–8; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 353–4.

¹⁶ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 355.

*on sait faire toujours par guerre?*¹⁷ The protection of these convoys was fundamental since any setback at this level put all the rest of the campaign in jeopardy. In 1385, Arnold of Hoemen and Paul of Haastrecht, *écoute* of 's Hertogenbosch, accompanied by a large number of men-at-arms, were ordered to bring provisions to the castles of Middelaar and Ammerzoden, two fortresses isolated in enemy territory. After these individuals were captured, the fortresses were no longer supplied and had to surrender.¹⁸ A little later, in 1388, the *écoute* of Maasland was charged with the control and the security of the roads leading to the Brabançon camp before Grave.¹⁹ These supply convoys were only sent to areas on the borders. To travel further into enemy territory would be to run too great a risk.

In this period, the maintenance of a secure and effective line of supply from a distant theatre of operations was all but impossible. Rather than waste any effort on this, it was much easier to live off the land. The combatants usually carried only a small amount of food. Daily nourishment had to be gathered as best it could, sometimes being bought and more often being plundered.²⁰ It was therefore preferable to organise expeditions at the right season. The defenders disposed of several means to force the enemy to retire. We know that they could cut off the invader from his bases. They could also attack the enemy's foragers and prevent them from carrying out their work.²¹ In the worst case a 'scorched earth' policy could always be used. In 1398, again during the notorious third war of Guelders, we can observe an extreme case of this; the people of Nieuwstadt chose to burn down their own town before fleeing rather than to leave it as a prize to the Brabançons.²²

The importance of supplies is also clear in the diplomatic sphere. Alliances often contained specific clauses forbidding the sale of merchandise to the enemies of the allies, for example, in the famous agreement of Saint-Quentin between the king of France and the duke of Brabant (1347)²³ or in the alliance between Brabant and Liège concluded in 1398.²⁴ More generally, we arrive at the idea of the economic blockade of a hostile town, a region or a country. In 1333–34, the coalition forces agreed the blockade of the duchy: the safe-conducts of Brabançon merchants were annulled, all commerce with the principality was forbidden, Brabançon holdings outside the duchy were confiscated and the townspeople of Malines and Saint-Trond suspected of

¹⁷ DD, II, pp. 569–70.

¹⁸ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 148.

¹⁹ AGR, CR, 2785.

²⁰ This is why the passage of an allied army was equally feared. It is as unsurprising for Charles VI to be refused passage on the roads of Brabant while he was hastening to chastise the duke of Guelders and to see on the return of that disastrous expedition the people of Maastricht fortify their town and take arms lest the French attempt to enter the town (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 221–2, 227–30, 248–9).

²¹ For example, the massacre at Sambeek of a group of foragers without an escort in 1388 (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 214).

²² DD, III, p. 136.

²³ Laurent, 'Les conventions', p. 126.

²⁴ BY, III, pp. 689–91.

pro-Brabançon sentiments were imprisoned.²⁵ The blockade was so effective that, according to a chronicler, not an egg could find its way into the lands of the duke!²⁶ Brabant was again blockaded in 1356 but this was of lesser extent.²⁷ When Louis of Male decided to force the surrender of the rebellious town of Ghent, he called on his neighbours for help. Wenceslas, to please him, forbade his subjects any commerce with the people of Ghent under pain of death. When rebel troops crossed the duchy in search of supplies in the spring of 1382, they found no help save for a little support from some partisans of the same cause. The duke's order was obeyed. The people of Ghent were far better received in Liège and the troops returned to Flanders with six hundred wagons loaded with victuals.²⁸ Then there was a rather surprising incident. In 1397, when the duke of Guelders and his men devastated the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch. Joan sent them a challenge and demanded that they should settle the quarrel by a pitched battle. William I could choose both the place and the time and Joan undertook to supply her enemies until the chosen date.²⁹ Only the specific circumstances can explain this strange conduct. She acted thus so that the Gueldrois should have no excuse to refuse the battle and so as to prevent them from plundering Brabant in search of supplies.

The *grande chevauchée* and courses

In the fourteenth century, the principal form of military action was the raid, the course or the *chevauchée*. The first war of Guelders (1366–68), the war against the principality of Liège (1378–79) or the third war of Guelders (1397–99) are conflicts representative of this form of warfare. Why did this strategy bring such success? Firstly, the destruction of farmland and villages was the best means to disturb the economy of an enemy land. Therefore, in 1371, a *chevauchée* organised against Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg, had as its first objective the ravaging of enemy harvests.³⁰ Thus the enemy's whole organisation and most of all the provisioning of men-at-arms and of strongholds could be disrupted. In an age in which land was the basis of wealth and a key element in the bonds between the prince and his men-at-arms, the destruction of the countryside aimed not only at military objectives but also at economic and political ones. The *chevauchée* and the devastation that it brought also showed the incapacity of the prince to fulfil his basic duty to maintain order and defend the country. It was thus an excellent means to bring the enemy sovereign to battle or to the negotiating table.

This last point, to force the enemy to give battle, was a fundamental strategic aim of this operation, as the *chevauchée* alone did not lead to the conquest of a

²⁵ Avonds, *Brabant* . . . *De grote*, pp. 43–4, 105–16.

²⁶ BY, I, pp. 513–14.

²⁷ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guere', pp. 90, 108.

²⁸ Froissart, *Chroniques*, IX, pp. 438–40; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 313. Curiously, Baerten who had studied this question does not breathe a word about Brabant in his article (Baerten, 'De Luikse voedselhulp aan de opstandige Gentenaren').

²⁹ DD, III, pp. 130–1.

³⁰ *Intraducant blada sua* . . . (AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 107).

region. In 1371, as soon as he had entered enemy territory, Wenceslas ordered that the land of Jülich should be put to the torch.³¹ The chronicle of Limburg explains that this action had no other aim than to bring the duke into the field.³² This was also the reason why Joan quickly challenged the duke of Guelders while he was in the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch rather than wait for him to retreat to his own lands (1387).³³ Pillaging was thus not simply the result of indiscipline, the low pay of the combatants, the desire to gather booty or the need to live off the land, but also and above all a deliberate strategic choice with great symbolic value. Sometimes, when the enemy refused to give battle, the *chevauchée* had the appearance of a simple show of force. So it was that Wenceslas made regular appearances before Leuven so as to force the government of the town to capitulate to his conditions (1361, 1363 and 1383). In the same way, Anthony accompanied by a large army marched through the duchy of Jülich and in the end forced the arrogant duke of Guelders to bend the knee (1407).³⁴ But as with all shows of force, the effects of such *chevauchées* were often temporary.

It is important to distinguish the *grandes chevauchées*, similar to the English expeditions of 1339–40, 1345, 1346, 1359–60, etc., from the operations of lesser extent, which were much more common in the principalities of the Low Countries and even in Burgundy. I do not believe that the *grande chevauchée* is a simple extension of the *course*.³⁵ They were two very different types of military operation. While it is true that the smaller operations often pursued the same strategic goals as the *grande chevauchée*, their tactical implementation was quite different. They possessed their own advantages. In an age in which the gathering of a large force was impossible to conceal, the organisation of a raid by some tens or hundreds of men allowed a surprise attack to be carried out without the enemy having time to prepare a defence or a counter-attack. The smaller size of the force provided great mobility and speed. The provisioning of the men-at-arms was easier as it was possible to obtain food and fodder from the land. Also, I categorically refuse to describe these actions as 'stratégie des accessoires dans toute sa déconcertante monotonie'.³⁶ The *guerre de courses* consisted in the organisation of a multitude of small *chevauchées*, harassing the enemy both to demoralise him and to weaken his economy. With a little luck, it might even be possible to seize some important place whose restitution would be the object of bitter bargaining in future negotiations. The *guerre de courses* was particularly effective when principalities of a smaller size than the kingdoms of England and France confronted each other. This technique allowed the greatest damage to be done at the smallest cost. This however did not dissuade

³¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21.

³² *Unde suchten den herzogen von Gulch daheime . . .* (Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger chronik*, p. 60).

³³ DD, III, pp. 130–1.

³⁴ Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 321–4.

³⁵ Unlike Schnerb, 'La bataille', pp. 7–10.

³⁶ Gaier, *Art*, pp. 214–16.

the duke of Brabant from organising a *grande chevauchée* if he judged it necessary (in 1371, in 1398 or in 1407).

Fortress strategy and siege warfare

Before the use of pyrotechnic artillery, the means of defence were superior to those of attack. For this reason, when the alarm sounded, the civil and military populations instinctively took refuge behind fortifications and walls. It is this response that Gaier very rightly calls the 'réflexe obsidional'.³⁷ The same author has shown that we should not underestimate the defensive resources of the towns and countryside and that it would be a mistake to imagine medieval armies laying waste to towns and fields at their whim. This sometimes occurred while the large English armies went over France, but troops in lesser numbers did not enjoy the same impunity. They had to take account of the numerous defensive elements – cemeteries, churches, monasteries, manor houses, towers, fortified villages, walled towns and castles – that dotted the countryside. These slowed down the progress of an invader.³⁸ They had to be reduced one by one by an attacker wishing to guard his rear and prevent them being used to harass his men.³⁹ To underline their importance, it is enough to recall that in 1332, it was in the abbey of Heylissem that John III sheltered⁴⁰ or that in 1356, the Flemish altered their invasion route so as to avoid the abbey of Affligem, which had caused them difficulties in their first attack.⁴¹

The important strategic function of fortified places explains the high incidence of sieges during medieval conflicts. Although we observe the destruction of a few fortresses (Sittard (1318), Fauquemont (1329) or Gaasbeek (1388)), it was more usual for urban centres to be the object of a siege (Ravenstein (1364), Zaltbommel (1366), Grave (1386 and 1388), Aldenhoven (1397), Nieuwstadt (1398), Roermond (1398), etc.). This is easily understood. While it was possible to neglect an enemy fortress, the town was an economic, administrative and human centre that played a role of the highest importance. It had to be controlled if one wished to assure one's mastery over the region. What is more, supplies and booty were essential to satisfy the appetites of men-at-arms on campaign. It was hence far more profitable to attack a town, even one possessing a curtain wall, than an enemy fortress, as the gains would be much greater.⁴²

Before the intensive use of cannon, the besieger had available to him five means of taking a stronghold: setting a blockade, using engines of war, mining

³⁷ Gaier, *Art*, p. 204.

³⁸ Gaier, 'Léau et la ligne de défense de la Gette'.

³⁹ As an example, consider the attack made by the garrison of Hannut against the rear of the army of Hughes of Pierrepont, bishop of Liège, when the latter was attempting to invade the duchy of Brabant in 1213 (Gaier, *Art*, pp. 81–2).

⁴⁰ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 118–19.

⁴¹ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', pp. 90, 94–5.

⁴² Let us not forget that by the law of war a town taken by storm was given up to plunder (Keen, *The Laws*, pp. 121–3). This is why cities agreed to pay a composition; the humiliation and cost were preferable to destruction. Thus, in 1398, the town of Jülich offered the sum of 30,000 Rhenish florins to avoid a siege by the Brabançons (DD, III, pp. 138–9).

the walls, assault and psychological pressure. Although these different weapons were used simultaneously, for the sake of clarity I shall analyse them consecutively.

To starve the enemy out was a very simple way to force a surrender. It sufficed to surround the place, to possess a regular means of supply oneself, and to have patience. In this way, John III was able to conquer the fortress of Fauquemont after a siege of nine weeks (1329).⁴³ The blockade was, however, rarely used by the military leaders of Brabant. As the duke had to pay wages to his men-at-arms, he preferred to carry out operations of shorter duration. Also, inactivity often had an ill effect on the morale of the troops. The knights did not find here any means to distinguish themselves⁴⁴ while the militia wished only to return home rapidly and recommence their daily lives. It therefore required determination on the part of the officers, well-established authority and a certain discipline on the part of the troops to bring this long operation to a successful end. When these elements were not all present, the strategy had to be altered even at the price of good sense. It would have been easy to organise a blockade of Grave in 1386. As the town lay on the northern frontier of the duchy, the supplying of the troops from 's Hertogenbosch would have been easy to organise. The Brabançons could easily have fortified their position and waited for the enemy to surrender. Unfortunately, the urban militias did not have enough patience and clamoured for more energetic measures. Their valiant attacks were however not enough to take the town.⁴⁵

Bombardment, by means of mechanical or pyrotechnic artillery, and the use of engines of war, had two precise aims. Firstly, it could destroy or at least weaken the opposing defences. Secondly, it played an important psychological role, diminishing the morale of those who suffered its attacks. For this reason we observe the presence of these engines in most of the sieges that we have examined. For example, in 1326, John III placed his workmen and artisans under the orders of a famous engineer charged with building siege engines for the duke.⁴⁶ Later, during the second siege of Grave (1388), the Brabançons used a panoply of engines. We observe the employ of bombards (*bombardis*), various machines (*diversorum tormentorum ingeniis*) hurling rocks (*globos saxeos*), red-hot shot (*globos ferreos candentes*) and burning missiles (*tela et jacula ignita*). A ram (*arietem ferrati frontis*) was also built but was not used.⁴⁷ In an age when wood was the basic material in the construction of buildings and when roofs were often thatched, it is easy to imagine the effectiveness of incendiary weapons.⁴⁸

⁴³ BY, I, pp. 482–7.

⁴⁴ During the siege of Roermond (1398), the count of Saint-Pol felt that his time was being wasted and he departed with his men to ravage the surrounding regions (*Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 439).

⁴⁵ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 150–1, 213.

⁴⁶ He had made his reputation at the siege of Volmarstein on the Rhur in 1324 (Procurator, *Willelmi*, pp. 151, 201–2; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 100). Siege engines again played a major role before this fortress in 1329 (DD, II, p. 551).

⁴⁷ DD, III, p. 124.

⁴⁸ In 1386, the militia of Brussels tried to start a major fire in the town of Grave (Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 151).

In some cases biological warfare was also used, as carrion was hurled into the town.⁴⁹

The besiegers had other means to weaken the defensive works. Sapping was a very effective technique. In 1329, the duke's sappers and miners played a key role in the fall of the fortress of Fauquemont.⁵⁰ The miners of Liège excelled in this task and they appeared regularly in different theatres of operations.⁵¹ Other major works were sometimes undertaken. In 1326, after having invested the fortress of Fauquemont, the duke ordered that the waters of the Geule should be diverted towards the village so as to inundate the low-lying parts. The inhabitants of the place called vainly on their lord for aid, as the gates of the castle remained closed.⁵² We have not been able to find out whether this operation was intended to damage the fortifications or if it was a simple act of retaliation against the subjects of an enemy ruler. This episode has some resemblance to the destruction of the dikes and waterways of Waterland ordered by Louis of Male during the war of the Succession of Brabant.⁵³

When the enemy refused to surrender, the besiegers had to nerve themselves for an assault. This was a difficult operation, especially when the opposing defences were still intact, and often costly in lives. Such a direct attack did sometimes allow a rapid victory, for example at Sittard in 1318,⁵⁴ but it was not always successful. The furious assaults against the town of Grave in 1386 and 1388 were as bloody as they were fruitless.⁵⁵

The morale of the besieged and their will to resist played a large part in the success of the defence. According to Jean le Bel, Brussels surrendered immediately after the defeat at Scheut because:

The townspeople of Brussels, fearing that the Flemish might enter the town, loot their houses, force their daughters and wives and kill them, decided to surrender on the morrow and give up the town to the Count of Flanders.⁵⁶

The surrender is easily explained: morale must have been at its lowest ebb; the garrison was reduced to a minimum as the militia had just suffered a terrible defeat; a blaze had just broken out in the Sainte-Catherine quarter and a strong enemy army was camped before the gates.⁵⁷ However, the chain reaction that followed, in which a dozen places in southern Brabant laid down their arms, is

⁴⁹ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 214.

⁵⁰ DD, II, p. 551.

⁵¹ At the siege of Reifferscheid (1385), before Gaasbeek (1388), alongside Charles VI (1388), at Roermond (1398) and at the siege of Elter (1412) (Gaier, 'Aux origines de l'industrie houillère liégeoise').

⁵² BY, I, pp. 474–6; DD, II, p. 546.

⁵³ De Limburg-Stirum, *Cartulaire*, II, p. 160.

⁵⁴ BY, I, pp. 453–60; DD, II, p. 498.

⁵⁵ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 151, 214.

⁵⁶ 'Les bourgeois de Bruxelles qui eurent doubtance que les Flamens n'entrassent en la ville, et desrobassent leurs maisons, et enforchassent leurs filles et leurs femmes et ne les tuassent, eurent tous conseil l'endemain de se rendre à eulx, et la ville au conte de Flandres' (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 231–2).

⁵⁷ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 97.

less comprehensible. This was not a unique occurrence. In 1419, while Henry V was taking control of Normandy:

(. . .) When the renderynge of Roan [Rouen] was blowen throughe Normandy, (. . .) it is in maner incredible to heare how manye townes yelded not once desired [to surrender], and how many fortresses gave up.⁵⁸

Only psychological factors can explain such behaviour. This situation is not unlike that occasional occurrence on the field of battle in which the flight of a single unit spreads panic progressively through the rest of the army and leads to a general rout. The assailant did not hesitate to make use of psychological tactics such as threats or promises of clemency to undermine the will of the enemy. Anne of Leyninge, lady of Gaasbeek, agreed to deliver up her castle to the militia of Brabant on condition that her life and those of her subjects should be spared and that they might take with them their property.⁵⁹ The possibility of receiving help swiftly was also an important element. In 1326, Renaud, lord of Fauquemont, had to surrender because the relief army promised by John the Blind was late in coming.⁶⁰ In 1334, the defenders of Sittard and Rolduc, suffering from famine, promised to give up their strongholds if the duke of Brabant was unable to rescue them in two weeks. In the contrary case, the fate of the fortresses would be decided by a pitched battle.⁶¹ When such an attempt was futile, it was better to surrender quickly and hope for mercy from the victor. In 1318, did not the Brabançons, exasperated by the resistance of Sittard, massacre all those that remained there after the surrender?⁶² A simple desire for vengeance or more complex strategic considerations explain the razing of strongholds taken sometimes at great cost. So it was that in 1288, John I razed the castle of Worringen and decapitated the occupants.⁶³ In 1329, John III cast down the fortress of Fauquemont, but this time the defenders were spared.⁶⁴ In 1366, it was the turn of the fortress of Hemmersbach to be razed. Thus, these three strongholds would not longer serve as refuge to the robber barons who too often troubled the commerce of Brabant in the region.⁶⁵ We should not forget that in the Middle Ages symbolic acts played a large part in reconciliation. We often observe the demolition of houses associated with a crime. For this reason, the militia of Brussels returned home satisfied once the fortress of Gaasbeek had been destroyed (1388).⁶⁶

⁵⁸ Rogers, 'The Age', p. 155.

⁵⁹ Boffa, 'Le différend', p. 95.

⁶⁰ DD, II, pp. 545, 546–7; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 69.

⁶¹ Against all the laws of war and to their great dishonour, the count of Luxemburg and his allies refused to give battle against the Brabançons (Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 152–5; Keen, *The Laws*, pp. 128–30).

⁶² Wauters, 'Jean III', col. 243. Remember that it was usual to massacre the garrison and the civilian population of a place taken by storm (Keen, *The Laws*, pp. 121–4).

⁶³ DD, II, p. 444.

⁶⁴ DD, II, p. 551.

⁶⁵ Let us not forget the pragmatic aspect of this situation. The victor was often inclined to raze a fortress that he could not hold. Thus, he avoided having to take it again in future. John III had to besiege Fauquemont several times because he did not do this.

⁶⁶ Boffa, 'Le différend', p. 95.

Pitched battles: general considerations

The military history of Brabant in the fourteenth century is particularly poor in pitched battles. We can identify only three major encounters (Vilvorde (1 May 1306),⁶⁷ Scheut (17 August 1356) and Baesweiler (22 August 1371)) and a few of lesser importance (Ter Helle (2 March 1334),⁶⁸ Malderen (3 August 1356),⁶⁹ Santvliet (11 March 1357),⁷⁰ Dalhem (1378)⁷¹ and Ravenstein (27 June 1388)). We might add to this list the battle of Tourinnes (21 July 1347),⁷² but the duke was present here only as an ally of the bishop of Liège, although he did play a major part in the battle. Contrary to a commonly received idea, this rarity is not owing to the absence of the concept of a 'decisive victory' in the Middle Ages. There are many examples of victories in the field that brought enormous profits in the political sphere. How, then, to explain this small number?

To begin with, a pitched battle was a wager of uncertain outcome.⁷³ A pitched battle was rarely the result of a chance encounter. After all, it was very difficult to compel an adversary to give battle. It was the business of grand strategy to force the hand of too cautious an enemy and bring him to battle. Sometimes, the opposing sides agreed upon a date and a place for the encounter. Often, one of the armies would establish itself in a favourable position and wait there for the enemy. As regards offensive strategy, the best means to force the enemy to give battle was to make a direct attack against his capital or a town of the first importance. The defending side had no choice but to see the town fall or to confront the invader. This is why Wenceslas, wishing to relieve Brussels, attacked the Flemish at Scheut and why the count of Jülich and his allies attacked the Brabançons at Baesweiler.

A good reason to avoid a battle of uncertain outcome was the exorbitant cost of a defeat. The price was often high in human lives as at the end of the Middle Ages, warfare was becoming more and more deadly, but above all the monetary price was astronomical as the practice of the *restor* was still in use until the end of the fourteenth century. Defeat was insupportable. It is therefore not surprising to see the commanders negotiate on the eve of battle. In 1356, when the Flemish and Brabançon armies found themselves face to face near the village of Asse, there took place several clashes but no direct confrontation. Neither Louis of Male, who had in fact just invaded Brabant, nor Wenceslas wished to run the risks of a pitched battle. The two rulers entered into negotiations and an armistice was rapidly agreed.⁷⁴

In certain cases, a strategic withdrawal was the only solution. During the third war of Guelders, Joan vainly challenged William I, who prudently chose to

⁶⁷ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 83–4; Bonenfant, 'Le premier', pp. 586–7.

⁶⁸ De Smet, *Mémoire*, pp. 12–13; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 100–1; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 151; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 97–8.

⁶⁹ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 98.

⁷⁰ De Smet, *Mémoire*, pp. 29–30, 40–1; Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 114.

⁷¹ Gaier, *Art*, p. 149.

⁷² Gaier, *Art*, pp. 298–306.

⁷³ DD, II, p. 630.

⁷⁴ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 90.

retreat into his own lands.⁷⁵ In case of invasion, the *réflexe obsidional* took the place of a withdrawal. This strategic choice was not dictated only by fear but also by the desire to obtain victory at the smallest risk. The defensive strategy of the era sometimes suggested that the countryside should be given up so that the enemy might exhaust his strength in hostile terrain while seeking the hypothetical opportunity of a battle. For this reason, the duke of Guelders wisely refused to confront the royal host and left the French to suffer from inaction and ill weather. Here once again, negotiations began without the adversaries joining battle.⁷⁶

Pitched battles: tactics

The confused accounts in the narrative sources unfortunately prevent us from reconstructing accurately the events of most of the battles mentioned above. It is nonetheless possible to give a concise relation of the course of events for the encounters at Vilvorde, ter Helle, Scheut, Baesweiler and Ravenstein:

In 1306, the rebels of Brussels left the town and advanced to Vilvorde where John II and his army were encamped. The men-at-arms had barely formed their order of battle when they were attacked by the Bruxellois, who charged furiously. The melee was terrible. The duke and some of his companions were unhorsed and their horses were killed. Despite their courage, the undisciplined rebel infantry had little chance against professional warriors. They were put to flight and Brussels had to surrender.⁷⁷ This battle was a classic case in which a mounted army confronted troops on foot. The defeat of the Bruxellois is easily explained; they chose to attack rather than to adopt a defensive strategy. Had they done so, the ducal army, unsupported by foot soldiers, would have had difficulty in breaking their ranks and dispersing them. The lack of discipline among the rebels seems to have been another factor that counted against them.

In 1334, John III entrusted the defence of Brussels and the western frontier of the duchy to Edward I, count of Bar. Accompanied by three hundred men-at-arms, he occupied the fortress of Vilvorde. When he learned that Flemish troops numbering about five hundred men⁷⁸ were approaching the outskirts of the capital, he decided to attack at Ter Helle (or Ten Hellekine), near Londerzeel.⁷⁹ It is difficult to say whether this was a small pitched battle or if the count of Bar was attempting an ambush against the enemy. Lucas, followed by Avonds, champions the latter hypothesis and suggests that the Brabançons attacked the invaders from behind.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the sources are not sufficiently clear on this point. In whatever manner, the two sides confronted each other. Since the Flemish wore a distinctive helmet, named *huven met kaken*,

⁷⁵ DD, III, pp. 130–1.

⁷⁶ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 239–44.

⁷⁷ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 83–4.

⁷⁸ BY, I, pp. 528–9; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 322.

⁷⁹ Wauters, *Histoire*, II, p. 131.

⁸⁰ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 151; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, p. 98.

which protected the face poorly,⁸¹ a Brabançon captain ordered his men to strike at their enemies' faces. Thanks to this stratagem, the victory was won. Three Flemish were killed and eighty-four taken prisoner (twelve knights and seventy-two squires).⁸² These losses might seem small, but they were sufficient for the count of Flanders to cease his attacks against Brabant. This feat of arms gave rise to a saying. When a man's face was hurt, he would be told:

You have been at Ten Hellekine.⁸³

At Scheut, the battle began with an exchange of war cries. The Flemish waited and the Brabançons took the initiative. Their cavalry boldly charged the enemy. Since the assault was unsuccessful,⁸⁴ the urban militia joined the attack. The melee was confused and victory seemed to be smiling on the Brabançons. Then, inexplicably, they panicked and fled. Fortunately for the defeated, the Flemish were unable to pursue the *couters* because the *Flamingi pedes pugnauerunt, non habentes equos quibus possent insequi fugientes, multi ex equestribus evaserunt . . .*⁸⁵ Although all the chroniclers agree on the suddenness of the disaster, their explanations differ considerably. According to Jean le Bel, the militia of Brussels and Leuven panicked first and threw into confusion the rest of the army.⁸⁶ This kind of panic terror was relatively frequent in the Middle Ages.⁸⁷ For others, it was the deplorable conduct of John (I) of Grimbergen, lord of Asse, hereditary standard-bearer of Brabant, that was the root cause. He took fright and threw the precious banner to the ground. Seeing this, the other combatants thought that the day was lost and quit the field of battle.⁸⁸ History is rich in examples of battles lost in this way.⁸⁹ Zylbergeld, developing an idea of Terlinden, holds that the Flemish had used field artillery. This new weapon would have surprised the Brabançons and led to the disruption of their formations.⁹⁰ While the first two explanations are entirely plausible, I think that this last hypothesis must be rejected. It is unthinkable that such an event should pass unmentioned by the many chroniclers.⁹¹ What is more, de Vries presents the

⁸¹ 'Qui videns Flamingos armatos galeis protensis ad maxillas vulgariter huven met kaken, et nudos in facie [habebant tunc in bellis gladios parvos] . . .' (*Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 229).

⁸² Discussion of these figures in Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, p. 98.

⁸³ 'Ja, ghi hebt ten Hellekine ghesyn' (*Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, p. 229).

⁸⁴ According to de Dynter, Gerard, count of Berg, and his men broke the ranks of the Flemish, but seeing that the battle could not be won they turned back to Vilvorde (DD, III, p. 26). This 'betrayal' does not seem to correspond to the character of the count as it appears from the documents and would not explain his presence with the duke at Leuven after the defeat.

⁸⁵ *Breve chronicon*, pp. 29–30.

⁸⁶ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 231.

⁸⁷ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 44–6.

⁸⁸ DD, III, p. 26; Villani, *Cronica*, III, 6, p. 208; Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 90; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 344–5; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 7; Despars, *Cronycke*, II, pp. 440–1.

⁸⁹ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 89–91.

⁹⁰ Zylbergeld, 'L'artillerie', pp. 615–17.

⁹¹ Verbruggen was the first to reject this idea (Verbruggen, 'Vlaamse gemeentelegers', pp. 381–2).

battle of Bevershoutsveld (1382) as the first occasion when the Flemish used field artillery.⁹² Other more concrete factors can also explain the Flemish victory. They probably enjoyed a numerical superiority. Since the bulk of the Flemish army was composed of urban militia, their few cavalry would surely have dismounted and fought on foot alongside the infantry of the towns according to a tactic current at the time.⁹³ They had chosen the ground, though they had not 'prepared' it as at Courtrai (1302). Finally, they seem to have adopted a defensive strategy and let the Brabançons take the initiative. The army of Brabant was of a more classical composition, a mixture of mounted troops and infantry. Here again, the absence of massed foot soldiers was keenly felt. We find the majority of the elements that allow an army of foot soldiers to defeat an army of horsemen.

The narrative sources describing the events of the battle of Baesweiler (1371) offer us two contradictory accounts. According to Jean Froissart, the Germans presented themselves in *une grosse bataille* before the Brabançon camp. The latter were taken by surprise since they were attending Mass. There was confusion and it was difficult for them to organise themselves in formation. The enemy profited by this to charge at once. The vanguard commanded by the count of Saint-Pol and his son suffered the first impact. They were swept away and general disaster followed.⁹⁴ The account of the *Brabantsche Yeesten* is quite different.⁹⁵ Following the chivalric customs of the time, the two sides fixed the place and the date of the combat. On the given day, Wenceslas ordered his army according to the most traditional pattern, that is, in three battles⁹⁶: the vanguard commanded by the count of Saint-Pol, the main battle under the duke's orders and the rearguard or reserve under the orders of Robert of Namur.⁹⁷ The duke of Jülich divided his army into two battles. The fray commenced. The duke of Guelders was quickly slain, but his death was kept secret so as not to alarm his men. The duke of Jülich was even captured by John of Diedegem who freed him on his parole.⁹⁸ The duke of Brabant distinguished himself in combat⁹⁹ and the Brabançons thought that they had won the day. Then, disordered and scattered, they were caught off guard by the enemy reserve. The duke as well as a large number of his men-at-arms were captured. The rest were dispersed or killed.¹⁰⁰

⁹² De Vries, 'The Forgotten Battle of Bevershoutsveld'.

⁹³ They fought thus at Courtrai (1302), Arques (1303), Mons-en-Pévèle (1304) and Cassel (1328).

⁹⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 21–4.

⁹⁵ BY, II, pp. 196–218; Van Berchen, *De Gelderse*, pp. 16–17.

⁹⁶ The *Brabantsche Yeesten* speak of *twee scaren* as they combine the vanguard and main battle. Another chronicle confirms the division into three battles. The numbers given for each battle, 6,000 and 2,000 men, are of course exaggerated (BY, II, p. 201; *Chronique anonyme* . . . Berne, p. 495).

⁹⁷ *Chronique anonyme* . . . Berne, p. 495.

⁹⁸ The capture of the duke of Jülich is a fantasy intended as a counterpoint to the capture of Wenceslas.

⁹⁹ The *Brabantsche Yeesten* are not alone in mentioning the duke's bravery. See also De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 18; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 357.

¹⁰⁰ BY, II, pp. 196–218.

Of the two accounts, that of Jean Froissart is the more credible. It fits better with the timing of events and its author had personally met several knights who had taken part in the battle. The *Brabantsche Yeesten*, by contrast, offer us a very formal description interspersed with *topoi*. This leads us to believe that it is a fictional construction. The defeat is difficult to explain. It seems that the Germans had the advantage of knowing the terrain, which they used to good advantage.¹⁰¹ No doubt, the surprise attack allowed the dukes of Jülich and Guelders to compensate for their inferior numbers.¹⁰² We do not know the circumstances of the duke's capture, but there can be no doubt that it strongly influenced the course of the battle. Elsewhere, two chronicles tell us that the troops commanded by Lambert, lord of Oupeye, Robert of Namur and Louis of Namur abandoned the duke and surrendered without fighting.¹⁰³ It is difficult to judge the truth of such an event and its possible effect on the progress of the battle.¹⁰⁴ Zimmerman and then Verbruggen hold that the victorious army of Brabant was surprised by an enemy reserve placed in ambush.¹⁰⁵ Delbrück and then van Oeteren suggest that the dukes of Jülich and Guelders might have organised the classic tactical trap of a pretended flight, so as to disorganise the enemy army and leave them at the mercy of a counter-attack.¹⁰⁶ This is possible but cannot be confirmed.

On 27 June 1388, early in the morning, the Brabançons left their encampment and headed towards Ravenstein where they intended to cross the Meuse. Once arrived at the bridge there, they put to flight the handful of Gueldrois charged with holding the crossing. Then, contrary to their orders, rather than setting out directly and discretely towards their objective, they pillaged the area. The reports of scouts and the smoke of fires clearly showed William I where to direct his counter-attack. When the duke of Guelders, who had rallied en route a party of his men-at-arms in flight, appeared in front of the Brabançons, there was panic in the ranks and a massacre ensued. Those who did not die in combat drowned in the Meuse while trying to escape the carnage. Many knights were taken prisoner and seventeen banners were lost. It is scarcely necessary to dwell on the causes of this defeat. The lack of discipline and the insubordination of the Brabançons, on the one hand, and the swift response of William I, on the other, account for it. Here again, the effect of surprise allowed the duke of Guelders to compensate for a probable inferiority in numbers.

¹⁰¹ The chronicler is unfortunately not more precise (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22).

¹⁰² About 1,500 *lances* for the Germans while the army of Brabant numbered about 2,500 men-at-arms.

¹⁰³ De Lewis, *Chronicon*, p. 124; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 357; BY, II, pp. 210–11, 216–18. Jean Froissart's excellent relations with Robert of Namur probably explains his silence over this episode.

¹⁰⁴ We find a counterpart to this episode in the other camp. According to the *Chronique de Cologne* and the *Annales Novesienses*, the count of Berg, an ally of the count of Jülich, took flight at the first contact; moreover, when he demanded later to take part in the division of the prisoners, the duchess of Jülich opposed him and called him a *regrattier de pommes*, an insult that he avenged by bringing devastation in the duchy of Jülich (Ernst, *Histoire*, v, p. 136).

¹⁰⁵ Verbruggen, 'L'art militaire', p. 492.

¹⁰⁶ Delbrück, *Geschichte*, III, pp. 376–81; Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', I, pp. 57–8.

The final score is hardly brilliant. Out of the five battles that we have reviewed, Brabant suffered three defeats. However, on paper, at both Baesweiler and Ravenstein Brabant began at an advantage, at Scheut their chances of victory were at least even and at ter Helle it was a cunning stratagem that led to victory. It cannot therefore have been bad luck but rather a poor use of what was in principle an impressive military capacity. Other factors played an important role. Certain members of the urban militia and the knighthood had difficulties in respecting or accepting sufficient discipline to follow a given strategy and to keep their heads in the heart of the melee. In this period, numerical superiority was not, as is often thought, decisive. Cohesion, morale and obedience on the part of the troops were far more important. The Brabançons had already learned this during a skirmish on the outskirts of Boneffe (1357). Their pride led them to believe that superiority in numbers was enough to bring victory.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, they did not remember the lesson.

Urban guerrilla warfare

The liberation of Brussels by Everard t'Serclaes (1356), the seizing of power in Leuven by Peter Coutereel (1360) and the suppression of the popular uprising in Brussels (1360) were military operations of the type now known as urban guerrilla warfare. Of these three episodes, the way in which the patricians of Brussels crushed the tradesmen is by far the most interesting and merits a detailed analysis. The butchers, placed in the interior of the town, and the fullers and weavers, quartered outside the curtain wall, decided to take control of Brussels during the night of 22 July 1360. When the Magistrate discovered the existence of the conspiracy, he called on the counsel of Gerard of Rotselaar, lord of Vorselaar, a man of war of high reputation. The latter was a proponent of rapid and forceful action. The insurrection had to be checked before it spread to the majority of the town or at least before the two rebellious groups, the butchers on the one hand and the fullers and weavers on the other, united their forces.¹⁰⁸ The military action is divided into two distinct phases. As the town walls held back one group of the insurgents (the fullers and weavers), the patricians first struck against the butchers. While they were marching towards the marketplace, they were attacked and driven back into their own quarter. Then, the encirclement of the rebels remaining outside the wall was organised. Three different groups, whose actions were to be coordinated by visible and audible signals, were to converge on the enemy at once. This pincer movement was a relatively simple plan but was particularly well suited to the situation. The patricians were surely less numerous than the tradesmen, but by attacking the different corporations before they could unite they did not suffer from this disadvantage. The burning of the *Raemstrate*, set alight just before the final assault, allowed them to divide the enemy forces. The fullers who lived there, preoccupied with saving their property, withdrew to their quarter rather than fight on. The patricians did

¹⁰⁷ 'Et y avoit grand nombre de gens sur quoy se confioient . . .' (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 238).

¹⁰⁸ DD, III, pp. 50, 567; BY, II, p. 162. These passages concern the revolts in Leuven, but there is no doubt that Gerard of Rotselaar argued the same course before the Magistrate of Brussels.

not hesitate to set light to part of the town in order to gain a tactical objective. In an age in which the majority of buildings were built in wood, this tactical use of fire bore considerable risks. The flames might have spread to the rest of the town. For the patricians, the end justified the means.

Before we leave this particular aspect of medieval warfare, let us note the plan developed in 1421 by the partisans of John IV to allow him to retake Brussels and be rid of his enemies. John Clutinc, a man loyal to the duke, was to take over the Saint-Nicolas tower and sound the bell there. At this signal, the duke accompanied by 1,400 or 1,500 men-at-arms would enter the town and occupy the *Spiegelbeke*. Thereafter, at the sound of trumpets and with banners raised, combat would be joined. Once the marketplace was taken, victory could not escape the legitimate lord of the town.¹⁰⁹ At Leuven as at Brussels, in 1356, in 1360 and in 1421, the marketplace and town hall were strategic locations of the highest importance. Their administrative and symbolic functions were such that victory went to the party that could take control of them. Let us not forget that in 1356, it was by raising the banner of Brabant at *de Sterre*, the house of the *amman* situated in the marketplace, that Everard t'Serclaes drove out the Flemish invaders from the capital.¹¹⁰

Stratagems of war

At the start of the fourteenth century, while John II and his men were besieging Malines, the townspeople demanded a truce and announced that they wanted peace. The confident Brabançons kept to their tents and waited for negotiations to begin. The Malinois seized the opportunity to make a surprise attack and killed a large number of their enemies.¹¹¹ In 1356, on the eve of the battle of Scheut, the Flemish captured a spy (*exploratore sive conspiratore*). During his captivity, by chance the prisoner learned some information of the first importance: the Flemish position was weak, retreat was their only hope of safety and the town of Brussels was impregnable. Shortly afterwards, he miraculously succeeded in escaping. The hero hastened to tell the Bruxellois all that he had heard. The latter, certain of victory, decided to attack the Flemish troops. The next day, they could see in the distance that the Flemish were breaking camp. They therefore hurried to attack an enemy whom they thought to be disorganised, but to their great surprise clashed with an army in formation. We know what followed . . .¹¹² It is difficult to describe these actions as 'brilliant tactical manoeuvres' or 'great feats of arms'. Although the ideals of chivalry were still important in the fourteenth century, war is a sufficiently pragmatic business to justify recourse to somewhat dishonourable actions. Examples are far from rare and it is sufficient to mention the most representative.

The taking of a stronghold is rarely an easy matter. However, the presence of

¹⁰⁹ Favresse, *L'avènement*, p. 206.

¹¹⁰ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 107.

¹¹¹ DD, II, p. 476.

¹¹² Although the veracity of this episode is doubtful, the author of the chronicle transmits it without scruples. He seems to admire the stratagem. This attitude indicates that such behaviour was not uncommon at the time (*Chronicon comitum Flandrensium*, pp. 230–1).

a 'fifth column' within the target could be decisive. It is thus that the Brabançons easily took Zaltbommel in 1366.¹¹³ In 1334, the castle and the town of Sittard were under the command of Arnold, lord of Stein. While he was absent, some of the inhabitants took control of the place and delivered it up to the enemies of Brabant.¹¹⁴ This misfortune prefigures the capture of Grave by the Gueldrois in 1386.¹¹⁵ There were of course other means to enter an enemy stronghold. In 1387, Scheiffart of Merode and thirty men-at-arms from Limburg¹¹⁶ presented themselves before the gates of the town of Straelen and passed themselves off as German knights come to reinforce the Gueldrois garrison. Thus, they entered the town, took control, pillaged it and retired with their booty.¹¹⁷ The capture of an enemy leader was an inelegant but very effective way to obtain a decisive advantage. In 1326, Renaud, lord of Fauquemont, in his unequal struggle with the duke of Brabant, tried to seize his person while he was travelling in the forest.¹¹⁸ In 1326, a natural son of John III unsuccessfully attacked the lord of Fauquemont while he was going to Cologne.¹¹⁹ A little later, a second attempt of equally little success was organised by the same man.¹²⁰ Shortly after the defeat at Baesweiler, Joan effectively took out a contract on the head of the count of Jülich. Had they succeeded in capturing him, Engelbert of La Mark and Adolf of La Mark, count of Cleves, would have been paid 100,000 *écus*.¹²¹

There is a fine line between abduction and assassination. Just before joining battle at Steppes (1213), Henry I ordered five of his knights to approach Louis (II), count of Looz, by stealth and to kill him.¹²² John II was probably involved in the murder of Floris V, count of Holland, in 1296.¹²³ Zantfliet attributes the death of Edward, duke of Guelders, to a Brabançon archer's arrow fired with the personal assent of Wenceslas (1371).¹²⁴ In 1368, the English reproached Wenceslas for his too Francophile attitude. John of Saint-Amand, canon of Cambrai and spy in their pay, was sent to Brabant with the mission of gathering intelligence on the armed forces of the duchy. For the sum of 20,000 *francs*, he undertook to make known the means by which the duke could be given poison to eat or drink.¹²⁵ Wenceslas was not the only duke to be the target of killers. In 1426, while John IV was hunting near Tervuren, two men sent by Jacqueline of

¹¹³ Nijhoff, *Gedenkwaardigheden*, II, pp. XCIX–C.

¹¹⁴ DD, II, p. 570.

¹¹⁵ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 146–7.

¹¹⁶ An important detail, which explains the confusion; the Limburgeois spoke German at that time.

¹¹⁷ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 204–5.

¹¹⁸ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 68.

¹¹⁹ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 91.

¹²⁰ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 91.

¹²¹ BY, II, pp. 621–2.

¹²² Gaier, 'La bataille de Steppes', p. 20.

¹²³ Niermeyer, 'Het sticht', pp. 295–6.

¹²⁴ Although this account is unfounded it nonetheless appears in an important narrative source (De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 297).

¹²⁵ Quicke, 'Jean de Saint-Amand'.

Bavaria waited for him hidden in a bush to seize or capture him.¹²⁶ For this reason, security measures were regularly taken. During the battle of Steppes (1213), Henry of Huldenberg bore the coat of arms of Henry I and gave his life to save that of the duke.¹²⁷ At Worringen (1288), John I entrusted the protection of his person to two knights (*breidelwachten*), Wautier of Warfusée and the Bastard of Wezemaal.¹²⁸ At Baesweiler (1371), Wenceslas placed himself under the protection of four squires *de grant volonté et bien tailliés*: John of Walton, Baldwin of Beaufort, Gerard du Biés and Roland of Cologne.¹²⁹ When the duke's own person was unreachable, his faithful servants could be struck instead. In 1386, at the dawn of the second war of Guelders, Renaud (II), lord of Schoonvorst, a sympathiser of William I, had John (II), lord of Gronsveld, one of the most powerful counsellors to Joan, assassinated.¹³⁰

Nothing was so effective as spreading internecine discord to paralyse an enemy's foreign politics. In 1328, John III lavished gold upon those close to Renaud, lord of Fauquemont, to push them towards rebellion. Some of these traitors tried to capture their lord but, being unmasked, were promptly executed.¹³¹ In 1334, the coalition made contact with vassals of John III and promised them protection and reward if they would rally to their cause.¹³² At the same time, John III was trying to buy off the subjects of the bishop of Liège, particularly the people of Huy, so as to prevent the bishop and his soldiers from joining the rest of the enemy troops.¹³³ In 1340, it was the turn of the king of France to incite rebellion against the duke.¹³⁴ The operation was a success and the Brabançon troops had prematurely to leave the army of the king of England.¹³⁵ As we have just seen, disinformation, manipulation, kidnapping, assassination and corruption were already well in use in the Middle Ages.

The combatants

From the end of the thirteenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century, the army of Brabant was composed mostly of mounted men-at-arms. They were regularly accompanied by the urban and rural militia, but these played a secondary role. While the combination of cavalry and infantry was sometimes necessary on tactical grounds, the mentality of the two types of troops was too different for the Brabançon commanders to be able to gain full advantage from the combination. Unlike their neighbours in Liège and Flanders, Brabant fielded troops that we could describe as of the French type. The men-at-arms were recruited in

¹²⁶ Galesloot, *Recherches*, p. 105; Wauters, *Histoire*, III, pp. 387–8.

¹²⁷ Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, p. 247; Gaier, *Grandes*, pp. 55–69.

¹²⁸ VH, p. 179.

¹²⁹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22.

¹³⁰ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 181–2.

¹³¹ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 91.

¹³² Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 148.

¹³³ Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 401.

¹³⁴ AGR, CB, 662–3.

¹³⁵ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 414.

Brabant itself, among noble families, knights or patricians, but also in the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse. The warriors of these latter two regions were particularly redoubtable since they served more for riches than out of loyalty. To gather booty seems to have been their principal motivation. They fought in the most classical manner. The Brabançon men-at-arms did not dismount and fight on foot in any of the battles mentioned above. This however was the usual style of combat not only among the English since the beginning of the century but also among the French since the middle of the fourteenth century. The Brabançons should not have been ignorant of this style of combat since they had had the opportunity to become familiar with it during the long alliance between John III and Edward III, especially while the English and their allies waited vainly to give battle against the French at La Flamengerie (1339). On 22 October 1339, Edward III had all his troops dismount, sent the horses to the rear and placed his archers on the wings of his formation.¹³⁶ On this occasion, the duke of Brabant formed the rearguard. This disposition was identical to that adopted at Dupplin Moor (1332) and Halidon Hill (1333).¹³⁷ So also, at the battle of Vottem (1346), the men-at-arms of Liège fought on foot alongside the urban militia while on the opposing side the companions of Thierry (IV) of Fauquemont dismounted before charging their enemies.¹³⁸ In any case, the cavalry of Brabant were twice unable to defeat opposing infantry (Scheut (1356) and Dalhem (1378)).

In the fourteenth century, the urban militia accompanied the duke regularly on his military expeditions, especially in cases of a *guerre commune* or a military operation linked to the defence of the realm, since such service was an obligation. When the duke's military objectives were pleasing to the towns, they sometimes offered their help spontaneously. This voluntary participation is a sign of their growing political role in the affairs of the duchy. The urban militia formed the infantry or footmen. As in Flanders and Liège, their members were armed with pikes or lances. The alliance concluded on 12 April 1357 between the count of Hainault and the duke of Brabant mentions an aid of 1,000 men-at-arms and 8,000 footmen. This high proportion of foot soldiers to cavalry is perhaps a sign of the growing tactical importance of the infantry at that time.¹³⁹ The towns of Brabant were probably able to muster this number of militiamen, since this figure is far lower than the theoretical strength of the infantry of Flanders or Liège. We should not however overestimate their effectiveness in the field. Although in one episode or another the chroniclers praise the pugnacity of the urban militia, we have a clear indication of their weakness at the siege of Gaasbeek (1388). The matter directly concerned the city of Brussels, and we may take it that the Magistrate had recourse to all available means to carry out the operations in the most diligent manner. Even so, the Bruxellois were unable to take the castle. The support of contingents from the other towns of the duchy does not seem to have brought any advantage since the

¹³⁶ Sumption, *The Hundred*, p. 287.

¹³⁷ De Vries, *Infantry*, pp. 112–28.

¹³⁸ Gaier, *Art*, pp. 190–4, 289–97; Gaier, 'La bataille de Vottem'.

¹³⁹ Van Mieris, *Groot*, II, p. 867.

siege drew out over more than three weeks. It was the actions of the miners of Liège and the negotiations undertaken by the duchess that led to the end of the siege. The urban militia had been shown to be incapable of taking the fortress.

Foot soldiers did not play a major role in the armies of Brabant. They were only effective when present en masse on the field of battle. This was not always the case. Although we do find companies of archers or crossbowmen in the towns, the duke never introduced, as in England, a coherent policy for their recruitment and training. Those documents that tell us of the numbers of the troops indicate that the usual tally did not exceed a hundred.¹⁴⁰ At the siege of Reifferscheid (1385) John (II), lord of Gronsveld, led a unit composed of 70 *lances* and 38 crossbowmen.¹⁴¹ Only the army raised in 1388 to protect the duchy included a large number: 1,200 *lances* and 400 crossbowmen.¹⁴² These numbers seem still too low for them to be able to play a tactical role on the battlefield. The urban militia were clearly an unsuitable force to answer the ever greater demands of the rulers of the time.¹⁴³ While they were sufficiently effective to provide for the defence of their towns, they could only fulfil an auxiliary role in the ducal armies. They were far less effective than their counterparts in Flanders or Liège. Even so, since the duke of Brabant had no recourse to mercenaries, he had no choice but to call upon the urban militia if he wished to field infantry in his army.

In the mid-fourteenth century, gunpowder artillery was a new and expensive weapon. It was however to spread rapidly in the duchy since the towns were sufficiently wealthy to obtain it. It was indeed a necessity if the authorities of the towns wished to provide an effective defence. At the end of the fourteenth century, the duchess did not possess her own artillery park. When needs must, she instead borrowed the artillery of the towns and fortresses. Firearms still did not play a major role in this period. During a siege, their low rate of fire prevented them from supplanting mechanical artillery or sapping. Field artillery was non-existent. Although Divaeus and Molanus affirm that the town of Leuven used thirty cannons at the battle of Santvliet (1356),¹⁴⁴ there is nothing to confirm the claims of these two authors. Not until the start of the fifteenth century do we find the first credible evidence of such use of artillery.¹⁴⁵ This late date should not surprise us. It does not seem that the powerful duke of Burgundy used mobile artillery before 1431.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 393.

¹⁴¹ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–2.

¹⁴² AGR, *Etats de Brabant*, supplément, 301 bis, ff. 108–12 v. Note the absence of infantry in this unit.

¹⁴³ Gaier has emphasised the lack of subtlety in the tactics of Liège. The same is clearly true of Brabant (Gaier, *Art*, pp. 173–4).

¹⁴⁴ Divaeus, *Rerum Lovaniensium*, p. 102; Molanus, *Historiae Lovaniensium*, II, p. 842.

¹⁴⁵ Thus is the conflict between Brussels and Malines in 1422:

Vele volcs [from Brussels] ghewapent ende wel versien van boghen, ghescutte ende bussen met gheere, ende anderen engiene oft gheweere (BY, III, p. 533)

¹⁴⁶ Schnerb, 'La bataille', p. 30.

Conclusions

The frequency and duration of medieval wars is easily explained. At the end of the Middle Ages, the power and authority of the rulers of the Low Countries were well established. A defeat, however terrible, was not enough to deliver the country over to an invader. Just as the kingdom of France did not disappear after the battles of Crécy, Poitiers or Agincourt, the legitimacy of the rule of Joan and Wenceslas was not brought into question by the terrible events of Scheut and Baesweiler. The stakes in a conflict were often limited to the control of small territorial entities, sometimes very rich, or to the stabilisation of frontiers. These were not wars of conquest but of consolidation. The comparable military capability of the opposing forces, the absence of decisive battles and the preference for the *guerre de courses* transformed most campaigns into a war of attrition. Neither of the antagonists was capable of a winning stroke and weariness drove them to negotiate. Unfortunately, the resulting peace treaties appear more like armistices valid only for the time needed to prepare a new offensive or for good weather to return. For this reason, a state of war was almost permanent in the fourteenth century.

At the end of the fourteenth century, in Brabant as elsewhere, strategic and tactical considerations played a large part in the progress of military operations. A specific aspect of grand strategy was the supplying of the combatants. The maintenance of lines of supply and the provisioning of an army were difficult matters. Several promising campaigns were aborted owing to a lack of supplies. Without exaggerating too much we might say that in enemy territory the search for food was the principal activity of the combatants. The *grandes chevauchées* conducted by the dukes of Brabant in Guelders had exactly the same aims as the similar operations directed by Edward III: ravage the lands of the French king, besiege an important city, and thus draw his enemy into battle where he could be decisively defeated.¹⁴⁷ This was exactly Wenceslas's aim in 1371 when he invaded the duchy of Jülich. Alongside the major expeditions, we have the *guerre de courses*, particularly popular in the Low Countries. These small *chevauchées* were easy to organise. Their onset was sudden and could reach areas deep in the heart of enemy territory. They also allowed the nobles and knights of the region to channel their bellicose temperament usefully. On the scale of the principalities of the Low Countries, with a restricted geographical scope, the *guerre de courses* was an excellent means to terrify the civilian population and weaken the economy of one's neighbours. The natural response to these large or small *chevauchées* was the *réflexe obsidional*. The countryside was dotted with fortified elements intended to greatly reduce its vulnerability to devastations. Hence, the invader had to reduce these bastions one by one if he wished to gain control of the territory and not have his front lines cut off from their bases. The siege was therefore a particularly frequent military operation.

The army of Brabant was organised in the classical or French style. A majority of men-at-arms, heavily armed and fighting on horseback, formed its

¹⁴⁷ Rogers, 'Edward III', p. 271.

major component. They were usually supported by the urban militia who provided foot soldiers and archers. The infantry were armed with pikes while archers were armed indifferently with bows or crossbows. The militia played a rather secondary role. They only had the chance to show their mettle during siege warfare. Although this was a typical army, that of Brabant differed strikingly from those of its two close neighbours. In the armies of the county of Flanders and the country of Liège, we find a much higher number of militiamen and far fewer mounted men-at-arms. Although difficulties with discipline are inherent in the armed forces,¹⁴⁸ the militia of Brabant seems to have been particularly inclined to disorder, insubordination and flight. We should however remember that these were only casual soldiers. A professional approach would be too much to expect of them. In any case, the men-at-arms were hardly above reproach. The chronicles overtly criticise even the most famous among them and they no doubt shared equally in the responsibility for the defeat at Ravenstein.¹⁴⁹

How should we judge the effectiveness of the 'war machine' in Brabant during the second half of the fourteenth century? The results are rather disappointing. Although the armies of the duchy had achieved some successes, their feats of arms provide mixed feelings in the observer. The valour of the combatants is not to be questioned. The chronicles praise the exploits of such and such a knight. Even the courage of the militia is honoured on some occasions. The organisation of the army, while not particularly original, was without particular faults. After all, the army mustered by Wenceslas for his *chevauchée* in Jülich was particularly impressive and few rulers in the Low Countries could assemble an equal. In fact, it was in the diplomatic and not the military sphere that Brabant suffered its worst defeats. The presence of a 'foreign' duke as well as the more and more prominent political role of the Estates often explain the incoherence of foreign policy and military decisions. The different interests of the ruler and the Estates, the nobles and the towns, prevented the duke from profiting fully from the military potential of the duchy. This was not novel; John III had already suffered the same unfortunate experience. Anthony, a far more active ruler, would be confronted, with no greater success, with the same problem.

¹⁴⁸ Bennett, 'The Development', pp. 17–19.

¹⁴⁹ I am thinking of the John (I) of Grimbergen and Gerard, count of Berg, at Scheut or Robert of Namur at Baesweiler.

Part Two
THE POWERS

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5

The Duke, the Duchess and their Entourage

Development of the ducal dignity

Introduction

Uyttebrouck has clearly shown that the duchy of Brabant was:

A group of territories of diverse origin, conglomerated in the course of time, subject to a person who was called, in the usage, the duke of Brabant.¹

Therefore, we can define the duchy only by the governing prince and not on the basis of its constituent territories. I entirely share this view, which makes the duke the central character. In the later Middle Ages, there is no doubt that powerful lords such as the count of Flanders, the duke of Brabant or the bishop of Liège exercised full sovereignty over the territories they controlled. However, the legitimacy of their power and the foundations of their authority are difficult to explain. It seems important to present briefly the development of the ducal authority, from a military point of view, as this will allow us to understand better the real power of a prince such as the duke of Brabant.

In the eleventh century, the counts of Leuven (*comes Lovaniensis*) were at the head of a small territory. Their transformation from functionaries into territorial princes, and the extension of their authority beyond the territories entrusted to their government, were constantly opposed by kings and emperors, by representatives of the imperial church, and by the dukes of Lower-Lotharingia. It is for this reason that in the eleventh century the count of Leuven was a much less powerful lord than the count of Flanders, the bishop of Liège or the count of Namur. In 1106, Henry V, king of the Romans, accorded the title of duke of Lower-Lotharingia to Godfrey I. The power of the count of Leuven now extended over the land of Herstal, the palatinate of Aachen and the march of Antwerp. This was a major territorial acquisition that strengthened the count politically, strategically and economically. We will not dwell on the political complexities that accompanied the nomination, as they have been well described elsewhere. Let us simply note that from then on, the counts of Leuven would be known as dukes of Lotharingia, and later as dukes of Brabant.² The title of duke

¹ 'Un groupe de territoires d'origines diverses, agglomérés au cours des temps, et soumis à un personnage qui est appelé, dans l'usage courant et de fait, duc de Brabant' (Uyttebrouck, 'Considérations sur le gouvernement du duché de Brabant'; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 21; Uyttebrouck, 'Le morcellement', pp. 81 et seq.; Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 30 et seq).

² Nelis, 'L'origine du titre'; Bonenfant and Bonenfant-Feytmans, 'Du duché'.

of Lower-Lotharingia did not increase the effective power of the counts of Leuven outside their own possessions. By the time Godfrey I received this dignity, the function of the duke had changed. In the eleventh century, the duke exerted no powers beyond the exclusively military, such as the defence of the frontier along the Scheldt or the maintenance of the *pax publica* in the duchy.³ Hence, the county of Leuven could be no more than the equal of the other Lotharingian principalities. Henry I was the last Brabançon prince to attempt to impose his authority over them, but he saw his ambitions shattered by the decisions of the Imperial Diet held at Schwäbische Hall in 1190.⁴

According to Despy, the duke of Lower-Lotharingia exerted powers of a principally military nature. The decision of the king of the Romans to accord this dignity to Godfrey I was not without motive, and must be considered with respect to the defence of the western frontier of the Empire. The king of Germany wished to reward the county of Leuven for having halted the Flemish expansion into imperial land.⁵ Yet on the purely military level, Godfrey I does not seem to have gained new powers. In fact, in 1107, an imposing army of 2,000 horsemen was paraded before the king at Verdun. Now, we do not find that the duke of Lower-Lotharingia took command; on the contrary, he shared the command with other princes such as the counts of Namur and of Looz. The same year, he warned the king of the attack on Cambresis by the count of Flanders, and organised the defence. Here again he did not act alone, but in collaboration with the count of Hainault.⁶ According to Klebel, from the Emperor Otto I onwards, armies were no longer organised by duchy but according to lines of vassalage. In this way the dukes lost part of their military authority.⁷ Thus the title of duke of Lower-Lotharingia increased the prestige of the count of Leuven, but he gained nothing in power.

The duke of Brabant, an independent territorial prince

The subordinate relationship between the dukes of Brabant and the emperors gradually weakened.⁸ There is too little space to retrace all the steps that increased this separation. Let us consider briefly the most important. The notion of their own sovereignty developed among the lords of Lower-Lotharingia at the end of the twelfth century.⁹ By the end of the next century the dukes made only the rarest mention of his obligations towards the emperor. While the will of Henry III (1261) still listed, among the reserved cases in which an aid could be demanded without the consent of the country, the *servicium imperatoris*

³ Despy, 'La fonction ducale en Lotharingie'; Laret-Kayser, 'La fonction et les pouvoirs ducaux en Basse-Lotharingie'.

⁴ Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, pp. 41–43, 229–232; Bonenfant and Bonenfant-Feytmans, 'Du duché', p. 1160.

⁵ Sproemberg, 'Das Erwachen', p. 43; Reese, *Die Niederlanden*, I, p. 80; Ganshof, 'Les origines de la Flandre impériale'.

⁶ MGH, *Constitutiones*, I, Hannover, 1893, p. 133; Reese, *Die Niederlanden*, I, pp. 78–9.

⁷ Klebel, 'Vom Herzogtum zum Territorium'.

⁸ Genicot, 'Empereur et princes en Basse-Lotharingie'.

⁹ Genicot, 'Ligne', p. 176.

Romanorum sive regum Alemannie,¹⁰ the charter of Cortenberg (1312) and later acts do not mention it.¹¹ The dukes, as vassals of the emperor, had to serve their sovereigns when required. This obligation was progressively forgotten, to the point that, when Louis of Bavaria was preparing to invade Lombardy in 1327, John III did not even respond to the emperor's summons.¹² Later, when on 12 October 1363 Charles IV ordered the archbishops of Mayence, Cologne and Trier, the bishops of the Low Countries, the dukes of Brabant, Guelders and Jülich, and the counts of Flanders and of Hainault to aid Arnold of Rummen in taking possession of his county, the order was simply ignored. The injunction would be repeated on 18 December, but to no avail.¹³ The authority and the prestige of the emperor in these regions had by this time become too weak for his decrees to be scrupulously followed. This occurred at a time when the duke was a relative of the emperor. From this point on, we still see kings and emperors claiming sovereignty in Brabant, but they could never again regain authority. The failure of the negotiations concerning the succession in the duchy and the seizure of control in the principality by the House of Burgundy are the best examples. Was not Anthony the first duke of Brabant not to render homage to the emperor?¹⁴

On the other hand, when the dukes appealed to the emperor they received little help. For example, this was the case during the difficult war of succession in Brabant. It is thus not surprising if Joan first appealed to the king of France before turning to the emperor, to achieve the liberation of her husband in 1371.¹⁵ At the end of his life, Wenceslas himself made no effort to bring the duchy of Brabant closer to the empire or to reconcile his wife with members of his own family in the House of Luxemburg. He was well aware of the uselessness of such efforts.¹⁶ It is therefore not surprising to see Joan secretly seal the future of the duchy on 28 September 1390 and assure Philip the Bold of his succession.¹⁷ Finally, let us note that John III, wishing to establish his independence, clearly stated that he was subject neither to the king of France¹⁸ nor to the king of England. Only personal alliances or his own interests explained his support for one of these sovereigns. When Edward III called on John III, the latter agreed to help him in his war against France, not only because the king of England was Vicar of the Empire and the duke had to protect the frontiers of that state (*Sriken palen helpen houden*), but above all because he wished to revenge himself for the threats against his person made by Philip VI at the time of the coalition against Brabant (1332–34).¹⁹

¹⁰ Boland, 'Le Testament', p. 77.

¹¹ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, I, p. 38.

¹² Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 63.

¹³ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 129; Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, IV, pp. 388, 395.

¹⁴ Galesloot, 'Revendications du duché de Brabant'; Quicke, 'Les relations diplomatiques'.

¹⁵ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 24; *Historia Gelriae*, pp. 49–59.

¹⁶ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 105–6.

¹⁷ BY, II, pp. 674–6; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 275–7.

¹⁸ BY, I, p. 494; DD, II, p. 556.

¹⁹ Van Boendale, 'Van den derden', pp. 319–20.

The *Joyeuse Entrée* of Brabant and the restrictions on the military powers of the duke

Introduction

The duke occupied a privileged position. His sovereignty extended over a large principality, which he governed in effect as an independent ruler. Even so, he should not be considered an omnipotent figure. Powerful, certainly, but not omnipotent. The military sphere is a good example. The modern conception according to which matters of war are under the control of the central power is not valid for the Middle Ages. Lords, great and small, raised their own armies and waged private wars, and towns had their own militias, which they made use of to deal with their difficulties. In this perspective the duke, as suzerain of numerous vassals and lord of major urban and rural communities, appears as one military chief among many, albeit with greater resources at his disposal. While the duke had the right to declare a 'private war' as he wished in defence of his own rights, this did not extend to drawing the full force of the duchy into the conflict. From 1356, the obligations, the rights and the limits on the power of the duke were laid down in a series of charters known by the name of the *Joyeuse Entrée* or *Blijde Inkomst*. This comprised the oaths of inauguration sworn by successive rulers. It became the most important document in the constitutional history of Brabant, and we shall systematically analyse those articles that concern military matters, in order to understand the legal basis of the military power of Wenceslas and Joan better.²⁰

The freedom to declare war

According to article ten of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, the duke had no right to declare war without first having gained the consent of the towns and country of Brabant. Naturally, in case of an attack on or confiscation of his domains, he could freely exercise his right of reprisal:

Furthermore, we promise them that we will never make war or make or cause to be made an attack against any man, except by the advice, the will and the consent of our good towns and our country, unless a war or an attack has been first made against us, in the same way that our dear lord and father, the aforementioned duke of Brabant, God keep his soul, held the aforementioned lands on either side the Meuse, as they are described above.²¹

It is not clear what sense to give to the word *orloghe*. According to Pouillet, we must attribute to this term the sense of 'public war' or 'common war'. The

²⁰ Van Bragt, *De Blijde Inkomst*.

²¹ 'Voirt gheloven wi hen, dat wi nemmermere orloghe beghynnen en suelen, noch pandynghe doen noch doen doen op yemene, het en waere bi rade, wille ende consent onser goder stede ende ons lants, het en waer, dat op ons orloghe ocht pandynghe irste gedaen waren, dats te verstaen alsoe verre alsoe onse lieve here ende vader, die hertoghe van Brabant vorg., daer God die ziele af hebben moet, sine voirs. lande houdende was in des zide des Masen ende in gheene zide der Masen, gelijc si voerbescreven staen' (Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 99).

prince was still free to undertake a 'private war'.²² Van Oeteren disagrees. In his opinion, the Estates, particularly the towns, tried to control all the military activity of the prince. The duke's private quarrels could, after all, have negative consequences for the economic life of the duchy.²³ Although explicit mention of *ghemeynen orloghe* or 'public war' is made later in the charter, in article twenty-four, it is still difficult to see what importance to attribute to the omission of the qualifier in the passage under discussion. If the duke could undertake a defensive war without having to consult the Estates, he was surely free to undertake a 'private war'. I am therefore unconvinced by the hypothesis van Oeteren. This clause is indirectly confirmed by a charter of 12 January 1386 (n. st.). In this document, the duchess promised that there would be no call to arms without the consent of the towns.²⁴ The successors of Joan and Wenceslas were no more fortunate. Article three of the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Anthony (18 December 1406) presents the same ideas.²⁵ In the *Nieuw Regiment* (12 May 1422), it is specified that the duke could not undertake any war without the agreement of three or four of his counsellors and without making letters patent on the subject so that all might know what had been decided.²⁶ Article three of the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Philip of Saint-Pol (23 May 1427) continues to limit the power of the duke in the same terms.²⁷

The right of conquest

Article twenty-four of the *Joyeuse Entrée* concerns the fate of any future conquests by the duke. All territories won in the course of a 'common war' (*ghemeyne orloghe*) were to be attached to the duchy and governed like the other lands of Brabant:

Furthermore, we promise them that the lands, cities, freeholds, seigniories or fortresses that we have won in common war or by the common army of our aforementioned land of Brabant, against what lord so ever, shall remain and belong to our common land of Brabant aforementioned, without return and doing as we should to our common land of Brabant without distinction, like our own land of Brabant.²⁸

This clause is probably the result of an ancient tradition. Already in 1318, John III, having conquered the fortress of Sittard thanks to the help of the urban militias, promised to unite that stronghold to the duchy of Limburg and never to

²² Poulet, *Histoire de la Joyeuse Entrée*, pp. 64–8.

²³ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 71–2.

²⁴ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 149–51; Mss div., 64, f. 321–7; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 140.

²⁵ Buisseret and De Puelle De La Nieppe, 'Cartulaire', pp. 46–7; *Den luyster*, II, p. 4.

²⁶ *Placcaeten*, IV, pp. 379–88; Poulet, *Histoire de la Joyeuse Entrée*, pp. 149–58.

²⁷ *Den luyster*, II, p. 52.

²⁸ 'Voirt gheloven wi hen, soe wat lande, stede, vrieheiden, heersscape ocht fortrechen, die wi wonnen met ghemeyne orloghe ocht met ghemeynen heere van onsen lande van Brabant voirschr., op wat heren dadt ware, dat dat blive soude ende toebehoiren onsen ghemeynen lande van Brabant voirs. sonder wederkeren, ende alle dies te plegene, dies onse ghemeyne lant sculdich is te pleghene sonder scheidene, gelijc onsen lande van Brabant' (Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 103).

separate the two.²⁹ On the other hand, there was no restriction as to conquests made by the duke in 'private war'. The duke was free to dispose of them as he saw fit, that is, to include them in his own domains. Anthony,³⁰ and Philip of Saint-Pol,³¹ would be subject to the same restriction.

The freedom to make alliances with foreign powers

Article three of the *Joyeuse Entrée* required Joan and Wenceslas to gain the consent of the towns and the country before they could conclude an alliance and use the Great Seal:

Furthermore, we promise them to never engage ourselves in the future with anyone without the will and the consent of our towns and common land, nor to seal with our Great Seal any deed by which our land or our frontiers of Brabant – as they belonged to our aforementioned lord and father on either side the Meuse – might be diminished or altered in any way whatsoever; the which seal will be kept in our aforementioned town of Brussels, and to this effect there will be three keys, as with the privileges found in our aforementioned town of Leuven.³²

It is not surprising to see the towns and the country trying to control the external politics of the duchy. It was an indirect but efficient way of preventing the duke from dragging the country into adventures in which they had no interest. This was not a new procedure; already in the Walloon charter (12 July 1314)³³ the towns and country forbade the duke to seal, without their consent, any act that could bring harm to the country.³⁴ The successors of Joan and Wenceslas were no more fortunate. Anthony,³⁵ John IV³⁶ and Philip of Saint-Pol³⁷ were likewise restricted. The duke was still free to contract private or personal alliances, as these did not commit the duchy to anything.

The former alliances with the county of Flanders and the principality of Liège

Article nine of their *Joyeuse Entrée*, with the same logic as article three already cited, obliged the duke and duchess to maintain the former alliances concluded

²⁹ DD, II, p. 498.

³⁰ Buisseret and De Prelle De La Nieppe, 'Cartulaire', p. 50; *Den luyster*, II, p. 6.

³¹ *Den luyster*, II, p. 56.

³² 'Voirt gheloven wi hen, dat wi ons nemmermeer namaels verbynden en suelen met yemene sonder wille ende consent onser stede ons ghemeyns lants, noch neghene saken en suelen doen bezegelen met onsen groten segel, daer onse lande ocht onse palen van Brabant – alsoe verre als onsen voirs. here ende vader toebehoirende waren op des zide der Masen ende op dander zide der Maisen – mede ghemyndert ocht ghecrent moechten werden in enigher manieren; die welke segel liggen sal onder onse voirs. stad van Bruessel, ende daer toe drie slotelen suelen sijn, gelijc ende in alder voeghen, dat ten privilegien sijn, die onder onse voirs. stat van Loeven liggen' (Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, pp. 96–7).

³³ Lousse, 'Les deux', pp. 40–6.

³⁴ Lousse, 'Les deux', p. 42.

³⁵ Buisseret and De Prelle De La Nieppe, 'Cartulaire', pp. 46–7; *Den luyster*, II, p. 4.

³⁶ *Placcaeten*, IV, pp. 379–88.

³⁷ *Den luyster*, II, p. 52.

with the county of Flanders (3 December 1339)³⁸ and with the principality of Liège (21 September 1347):³⁹

Furthermore, we, the aforementioned duchess and duke, promise to maintain and swear to the alliances made between us, our good people and country of Brabant, and the count of Flanders, his good people and country, as indicated in the letters which have been made and sealed to this effect; and equally to maintain the alliance between us, our good people and country of Brabant, and the good people and country of the bishopric of Liege.⁴⁰

This article, as with our preceding point, is not as innocent as it seems. Flanders and Liège were turbulent neighbours and there were many reasons for conflict with them. To force the duke to maintain the former alliances was to prevent an entry into a war that could not be profitable for the duchy. Events fell otherwise, however, and from 1356 Brabant found itself in opposition to these two principalities. The tradition, by which one part of the country (*pays*) would act as guarantor for a treaty concluded by the prince, was ancient as there is evidence for this in the years 1195⁴¹ and 1213.⁴² Later Anthony had to swear to the same article.⁴³ By contrast, and unlike the points examined so far, this clause disappears from the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Philip of Saint-Pol. Developments in inter-principality politics in the Low Countries, and the progressive taking of control in these regions by the House of Burgundy, were surely the reason.

Diverse constraints

Apart from the various points presented so far, there are also several articles that refer, not directly to military affairs, but to matters whose influence on this domain is far from negligible. Examples are the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Brabant (article one), the maintenance of internal peace (article eight), limitation of the right of seizure (article ten), and control of the integrity of the duke's functionaries (articles eleven and thirty-three) etc. It is understood that the successors to Joan and Wenceslas were also subject to the same demands.

The duke of Brabant's respect for these constraints

We have just seen that the oath of inauguration taken by Joan and Wenceslas imposed upon them a number of restrictions. Fortunately, for the duke and the duchess, the *Joyeuse Entrée* became worthless after the war of the succession of

³⁸ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 108–16; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 348–52.

³⁹ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 119–21.

⁴⁰ 'Voirt gheloven wi, herthogynne ende hertoghe voirg., te houdene ende te swerne die verbonde, die ghemaect sijn tusschen ons, onsen goiden lieden ende lande van Brabant, den greve van Vlanderen, sinen goiden lieden ende lande, gelijc die brieve in hebben, die daer op ghemaect sijn ende bezegelt; ende alle des gelijcs te houdene tverbont tusschen ons, onsen goiden lieden ende lande van Brabant ende den goide lieden ende lande van den bysdom van Ludeke' (Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 99).

⁴¹ De Reiffenberg, *Cartulaires*, p. 318.

⁴² Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, pp. 139–40.

⁴³ Buisseret and De Prelle De La Nieppe, 'Cartulaire', p. 48; *Den luyster*, II, p. 5.

Brabant, probably owing to the 'treason' of the towns of Brussels and Leuven, imitated by other less important cities, in August 1356.⁴⁴ At the negotiations in Maastricht (February 1357) between the emperor Charles IV, Wenceslas and Joan, and the towns of the duchy, the validity of the oath was officially questioned. During this meeting, it was decided that Brabant would descend to the family of Luxemburg if Joan did not produce a male heir.⁴⁵ In the years that followed, the towns, wishing to be pardoned for their disloyal conduct, did not protest against Wenceslas' authoritarian attitude. After the defeat at Baesweiler and the capture of the duke, the situation changed dramatically. In 1372, the charter of Cortenberg and the Walloon charter were confirmed. According to Van Der Straeten, there was no reference to the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Joan and Wenceslas at that time because people were unaware of the importance of the document. By contrast, the charter of Cortenberg, like the Walloon charter, had a clause of perpetuity.⁴⁶ He simply forgets that the *Joyeuse Entrée* was an oath of inauguration and that there was no reason to renew it in 1372. In 1406, on the other hand, Anthony would have to swear the same oath in order to succeed Joan. After the death of Wenceslas, the Estates became more and more powerful, and watched closely over the strict application of the clauses of the *Joyeuse Entrée*.

In the event of a violation of one of the clauses previously cited, the parties concerned had the right to refuse to serve the duke, to disobey him and even to oppose his actions. This right of disobedience was traditional. In a peace treaty concluded on 20 August 1194, between the duke of Brabant and the count of Hainault and Flanders, we already find such a clause. The vassals of the two princes, as well as the townspeople of Brabant, Namur, Flanders and Hainault, were guarantors for the observance of the peace. If the duke were to infringe the treaty and did not wish to remedy the situation within forty days of a warning from his vassals, they could withdraw completely from his service and deny him aid and counsel until he corrected the infraction he had committed.⁴⁷ The extent of this threat is very clearly expressed in a letter of non-prejudice, dated the 23 March 1293, accorded by John I to his vassals and subjects on the occasion of the levying of an extraordinary aid:

And if we or one of our heirs should go against the articles of these letters, we wish and grant that our people aforementioned should not have to go with us in the *ost* or the *chevauchée*, nor to give judgement upon those matters which they are required to judge, nor to render other services to us or to our heirs, until we or our heirs shall fulfill the aforementioned articles.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Van Uytven, 'De rechtsgeldigheid van de Brabantse Blijde Inkomst'.

⁴⁵ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', pp. 111–13.

⁴⁶ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, I, pp. 95–6.

⁴⁷ Favresse, 'Actes', pp. 374–6.

⁴⁸ 'Et s'il avenist chose ke nous ou aucuns de nous hoirs, venissent contre les convenances de ces presentes lettres, nous voulons et octroions, que cil no homme devant-dites ne fussent tenu d'alleir aveckes nous en ost ne en chevauchie, ne rendre jugement nul en quel maniere qu'il en fuissent requis, ne faire autre service nul à nous ne à nos hoirs, iusques à tant ke nous ou nos hoirs eussions du tout accomplies les conventions devant-dites' (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 131; Favresse, 'Actes', pp. 481–3).

We also find this right of disobedience in most important documents such as the charter of Cortenberg,⁴⁹ the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Joan and Wenceslas,⁵⁰ the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Anthony,⁵¹ the *Privilège du Ruward* (4 May 1421)⁵² and the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Philip of Saint-Pol.⁵³ Contrary to the claims of Pouillet, this right of resistance was not only passive.⁵⁴ In 1179–80, the *échevins*, the *amman* and the townspeople of Brussels were guarantors for a convention between the count of Flanders and the duke of Brabant. They undertook to assist the count in the case of the duke not respecting his engagements.⁵⁵ Later, in 1421, John IV goes even further. He must agree that any territory or town attacked by him or his men had the right to take up arms to repulse the attacker without exposing themselves to any reprisals.⁵⁶ Not only disobedience, but even rebellion was legitimised. It is, however, necessary to consider the scope of this document and recall the troubled times during which it was promulgated.

Conclusions

To wage war, a ruler required three things: freedom of action, men-at-arms and a war chest. In theory, the duke possessed all three. His sovereignty permitted him to open hostilities, his vassals were required to follow him into battle and taxes could be levied on his lands. In practice, the situation was very different. The oath of the *Joyeuse Entrée* was particularly restrictive and allowed the towns and country to take an active part in ducal policies. Both the external and internal politics of the duke and duchess were influenced by all these constraints. Neither Wenceslas nor Joan undertook wars of conquest. Knowing that all territories conquered in a ‘common war’ would pass under the control of the country and not into their own patrimony, they may have thought that such expeditions were not worth the trouble. When the duke undertook a ‘private war’ such as the *chevauchée* of Jülich, in accordance with the *Joyeuse Entrée*, the country did not take part. This lack of interest in Wenceslas’ private affairs was such that the Estates even refused to take arms in order to free the imprisoned duke. While the validity of the *Joyeuse Entrée* was sometimes put in question, the duke and duchess preferred to agree with the Estates over military matters. For one thing, the right of disobedience was no vain threat. It is in this category that we must place the events that disturbed the duchy between 1372 and 1374, as well as the enormous difficulties encountered by John IV in imposing his authority in the 1420s. Also, and more importantly, if the ruler had a natural tendency to oppose the interference of the Estates in his government, he needed their support in wartime or else he could not rely on the help of the country. Compromises were therefore necessary. If the ruler could not declare a ‘common war’ without the

⁴⁹ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 14–15.

⁵⁰ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, pp. 105–6.

⁵¹ *Placcaeten*, I, p. 143.

⁵² Uyttebrouck, ‘Liste’, pp. 244–5.

⁵³ *Placcaeten*, I, pp. 151–2.

⁵⁴ Pouillet, *Histoire de la Joyeuse Entrée*, p. 362.

⁵⁵ Favresse, ‘Actes’, pp. 366–9.

⁵⁶ AVL, 1347; *Den luyster*, II, pp. 32–3; Favresse, *L’avènement*, pp. 244–5.

agreement of the towns and the country, he was still free to start a 'private war'. As this would be at his own expense, and the duke's personal coffers were scarcely overflowing, it was impossible to raise a major army. This situation ensured that the duke's bellicose ambitions were strictly limited.

In closing, I would like to mention an interesting document. On 11 August 1359, Wenceslas made known that his cousin, Waleran, count of Sponheim, had permitted him to leave the army until the feast of the Assumption, and that he had undertaken to rejoin the said army at Leuven on the eve of this feast.⁵⁷ This charter probably refers to the expedition mounted against the three brothers of Schleiden, lord of Jünkerath. The leaders of this army were Cuno of Falkenstein, archbishop of Trier, Wenceslas, and Waleran, count of Sponheim.⁵⁸ The duke, his authority divided, thus had to obtain the permission of one of his peers in order to absent himself. Again, we see the duke's power limited, but this is an exceptional case.

The attitude of the duke and duchess in wartime

Wenceslas of Luxemburg

In the Middle Ages, one of the most important characteristics expected of a ruler was that he should be a soldier and, often, be able to command his army personally.⁵⁹ This was an heavy responsibility since the arts of government and of generalship are very different things. Few were the rulers so fortunate as to enjoy both of these gifts, but there was no question of removing a proven incompetent from this role. Wenceslas had a difficult start to his reign. Scarcely had he mounted the throne before he found himself at war with Flanders. He placed himself clearly at the head of the Brabançon army during this conflict and commanded personally the army charged with stopping the first invasion of the duchy. His political clumsiness then placed him in a delicate situation, as the duchess and the Estates annulled his decisions. His position then became more ambiguous. Wenceslas was still duke, but he seemed to become a background figure when Louis of Male invaded the duchy for the second time. The narrative sources rarely mention him. His presence at the battle of Scheut is known to us principally from the description of his flight across the duchy.⁶⁰ Villani openly criticised Wenceslas when he wrote that at Scheut, the pride of the duke and the temerity of the Brabançons were confounded, and described him as a coward.⁶¹ In fact, during this period it was Gerard, count of Berg, who seems to have been the most important figure in the Brabançon camp. After the liberation of the duchy, Wenceslas regained his privileged position, as the towns had to beg

⁵⁷ AGR, CLux, 994.

⁵⁸ AGR, Mss div., 5, f. 177, 181, 196 v.

⁵⁹ At Worringen, even if John I delegated part of his authority to the count of Virneburg we still observe the duke of Brabant acting according to his own will during the battle (Salpêtre, 'La bataille', p. 188).

⁶⁰ De Smet, *Mémoire*, pp. 27–8.

⁶¹ Villani, *Cronica*, III, pp. 166, 211.

forgiveness for their spineless attitude. On the whole, the duke made a poor showing during this war.⁶² In his defence, we should recall that Wenceslas was only nineteen years old at the time. Later, at the battle of Baesweiler, Wenceslas acted very differently. In the heart of the melee, he fought bravely.⁶³ Seeing that the day was lost, he preferred to surrender rather than flee.⁶⁴ It is difficult to check the veracity of the episode concerning the duke and it is quite possible that he did not have the opportunity to flee. Nonetheless, the testimony of the chronicler is representative of a certain state of mind that reigned at the time and it shows a positive evolution in the judgment on Wenceslas.

To command the army personally is a choice that may seem questionable on the part of a public figure such as the duke. In fact, his presence was necessary in a hard-fought battle to unite and spur on his military forces among whom he was often the only link. Nevertheless, the presence of the ruler in the front line was an idea of warfare that would progressively disappear during the fifteenth century. Wenceslas of Luxemburg was clearly a man of war; scarcely a year passed in which he did not take part in a military expedition. Among the conflicts described in the first chapter, there was not one in which he was not found in person at the head of his forces.⁶⁵ He was a warrior-prince in the mould of his father, John the Blind, who fell at the battle of Crécy. Jean Froissart, to whom Wenceslas was a patron, confirms this portrait.⁶⁶

Joan of Brabant

We can scarcely imagine the duchess charging the enemy with her men-at-arms. While the duchess did on a few rare occasions lead the troops on their way to battle, she never fought at their head.⁶⁷ There are more reasons for this. Before the death of her husband, it was for him to assume this role. After his death, in 1383, Joan was 61 years old; a sufficiently respectable age for her to leave to others the rigours of an army on the march. Furthermore, among her counsellors and ducal officers there were many professional warriors. It was thus easy for Joan to delegate her responsibilities. However, throughout her long reign, Joan never lost interest in the conduct of war. During the war of the succession of Brabant, Joan, unlike her husband, displayed an exemplary attitude, and even opposed him for the sake of the country's interests. When the Brabançons gave battle at Scheut, Joan was in Brussels. After the defeat, she fled hastily to her dower lands of Binche, accompanied only by a valet and a chambermaid.⁶⁸ Once the duchy was no longer occupied except by a few Flemish garrisons, she betook

⁶² Butkens criticises the ducal entourage, but we do not know what source he used in forming this severe judgment (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 469).

⁶³ BY, II, p. 205.

⁶⁴ BY, II, pp. 211; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 296.

⁶⁵ It is possible that during the war against Godfrey (III), lord of Heinsberg, the direction of military operations was entrusted to ducal officers, but our information about this conflict is too fragmentary to be certain.

⁶⁶ Froissart, *Chroniques*, ed. by Luce, XIV, pp. 159–60.

⁶⁷ Von Northof, *Die Chronik*, p. 406.

⁶⁸ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, p. 185; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 231; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 263.

herself to 's Hertogenbosch to continue the struggle.⁶⁹ There she represented the legitimate government in opposition to the usurper at Malines. On 6 October, she proclaimed to her faithful subjects in Brussels and Leuven that she was holding court at 's Hertogenbosch, that Charles IV would send troops to her husband's aid and that all was not lost.⁷⁰ While the duchess did not personally command the Brabançon army she nonetheless embodied the spirit of resistance to the Flemish invader. In 1371, while her husband was in Jülich, Joan waited for him in Brussels, remaining in close contact with him by means of messengers.⁷¹ There she had prayers said in his favour.⁷² After the defeat at Baesweiler, the duchess assembled the Estates and indicated clearly her wish to continue the hostilities.⁷³ She ordered the seizure of the goods of subjects of Jülich,⁷⁴ and sought the aid of neighbouring rulers. When the emperor Charles IV gathered his troops in June 1372, Joan joined them at the head of the Brabançon contingent.⁷⁵ Habitually, Joan did not accompany Wenceslas when he went to war. She had more to do at the head of government than in distant lands. The Estates, which had always had more respect for the duchess than for her husband, understood this, as was clearly shown on 4 March 1376 (n. st.), when the towns of Brussels and Leuven asked Joan to remain in the duchy, as Wenceslas had gone to fight the *grandes compagnies*.⁷⁶

Upon the death of Wenceslas, Edmond de Dynter tells us that the duchess wore mourning for her husband for an entire year, without leaving her chamber in the palace of Coudenberg. It was the challenge of the duke of Guelders that brought her out of this retreat. She had to expunge the affront he had given her.⁷⁷ Although this episode is of course imaginary, it marks the beginning of a new epoch for the duchess. From then on, she governed Brabant alone. During the second and third wars of Guelders, Joan's attitude is revealing of the manner in which she had decided to take up her new responsibilities. In 1386, she wished to accompany the army besieging Grave, but her counsellors advised her to remain at 's Hertogenbosch, where she stayed throughout the conflict.⁷⁸ During the second siege of the town, the duchess once more moved with her troops to Lierre, a town which, although situated far from the northern frontier of the duchy, seems to have possessed a certain strategic importance.⁷⁹ It was there that, from 30 August 1397, Joan and her troops waited in vain for an opportunity to confront the army of the duke of Guelders.⁸⁰ On this occasion, Edmond de Dynter describes the attitude of the duchess in a most revealing fashion:

⁶⁹ AGR, CB, 932 bis.

⁷⁰ BY, II, p. 516; Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', pp. 104–5.

⁷¹ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65, 106.

⁷² AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65.

⁷³ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 187–8.

⁷⁴ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 139; AVB, 't groot boeck metten knopen, f. 5 v.–6.

⁷⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 57; AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 93.

⁷⁶ AVL, 4.999, f. 76 r.

⁷⁷ DD, III, p. 108.

⁷⁸ DD, III, p. 113; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', pp. 176–7.

⁷⁹ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 94; CC, 17.144, f. 246; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 185.

⁸⁰ DD, III, pp. 130–1; AGR, CB, 7.437, 7.438; CC, 2.384, f. 52, 57, 58, 61; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 209.

As a woman of great courage, after the manner of a virtuous man, who knew her own mind.⁸¹

When William I retreated into his own lands, the Brabançons attacked the duchy of Jülich and, as usual, the duchess accompanied her troops as far as the frontier, remaining at Maastricht during the *chevauchée*.⁸² She did the same in the following year, during another attack on Jülich.⁸³ With Joan remaining in Brabant, one or more of her officers or counsellors took effective command of the army. The duchess, as their hierarchical superior, thus remained the head of the army. Edmond de Dynter does not exaggerate when he describes the duchess ordering her captains to continue the fight⁸⁴ or when some of them hesitated to carry out an operation for which they had not received orders.⁸⁵

Anthony of Burgundy

On 7 May 1404, Joan officially ceded the governance of the duchy to her niece, Margaret of Male.⁸⁶ A few days later, the latter granted the governance to her son, Anthony. He became governor (*ruward*) of Brabant in the name of his great-aunt. He was thus charged, among other things, to protect and defend the duchy and to muster the Brabançons in the event of a 'common war'.⁸⁷ However, the lack of military activity during the regency of Anthony does not permit us to analyse the attitude or the powers of the governor in time of war.

The Household

The Household originated from the ancient *Curia*. Unfortunately, we know very little about this organisation before the reign of Anthony.⁸⁸ I shall however set out the information at our disposal, as among the services of the Household we find some whose functions are, directly or indirectly, linked to warfare:

The Chamber was responsible for the lodging and clothing of the court. It also dealt with the personal arms, armour, saddles and harness of the duke as the expenses for *harnasch* appear among those of the Chamber.⁸⁹ Until Anthony, the ducal armourer (*harnaschmeester*) was attached to this office. Thereafter, he and his valets belonged to the Chamber of Armour (*Harnaschcamer*), a small

⁸¹ 'Comme femme de grant courage, à la manière d'un homme vertueux très-ferme en sa pensée' (DD, III, pp. 130, 632).

⁸² DD, III, pp. 131–2; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 209.

⁸³ DD, III, p. 135; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 213.

⁸⁴ DD, III, pp. 125–6.

⁸⁵ DD, III, p. 129.

⁸⁶ Bonenfant, Bartier and Van Nieuwenhuysen, *Ordonnances*, pp. 678–84.

⁸⁷ Bonenfant, Bartier and Van Nieuwenhuysen, *Ordonnances*, pp. 701–5.

⁸⁸ Kauch, 'L'organisation et le contrôle financier de l'Hôtel d'Antoine de Bourgogne'; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 155–224.

⁸⁹ Curiously, the first mention dates from after the death of Wenceslas (AGR, CC, 2.370, f. 99; CC, 2.372, f. 99; CC, 2.373, f. 109; CC, 2.374, f. 68).

office of the Household more or less independent of the Chamber.⁹⁰ Finally, this officer would be attached to the service of the Marshal of the Household.⁹¹

The most important section of the *Maréchalerie* was the Stable (*Orstalle*). Here were found various valets of whom some were specialists in the training and upkeep of horses for tournaments or warfare, such as *Claus in den orstalle* or *Piret uten orstalle*.⁹²

The duke's safety was of prime importance, as he was a target of choice in the heat of battle. Nevertheless, it is not until the reign of Anthony that a company of fifteen archers was charged with the close protection of the duke. The first chamberlain, William Blondel, whose exact prerogatives we do not know, commanded them.⁹³ Well before this date, the duke sometimes benefited from the protection of bodyguards. This was the case at Worringen, where a group of sergeants enjoyed particular favour and were ready to sacrifice their lives for the duke. However, it is still difficult for us to be sure of the ties linking these men to John I. Indeed, although they received clothing, it is impossible to know if they were part of the Household.⁹⁴ At Baesweiler, the *huusgesinde* formed a unit of about thirty combatants.⁹⁵ The term *tshertoghen huusgesinde* can be rendered as 'those of the *Hôtel*' or 'the household of the duke'. However, on examining this *route*, we notice that few among them were part of the domestic services. We find here Thierion of Belva, *de kamerlinc*, no doubt valet to the prince, Arnold the Bouteiller,⁹⁶ Herman Langhel, surgeon, and John-John Rossel, 'trumpeter to the duke'. The John of Leuven who is also mentioned may have been a herald, but the quittances do not specify.⁹⁷ These were not officers, but rather servants of modest rank. In contrast, the great families of the duchy were well represented here, though often not by the eldest of these lineages, as they would have led their own *route*. Instead, these were their sons or heirs.⁹⁸ Rather than being servants of the duke, the *huusgesinde* were young squires from the great families of Brabant. The losses among this *route* were particularly critical. Van Oeteren has calculated that they were as high as 10 per cent while the average percentage for the whole army is estimated at 2.9 per cent.⁹⁹ This was probably a result of the bloody fighting which preceded the capture of Wenceslas. The *chevauchée* of Jülich was not the only expedition in which members of the Household took part. At Agincourt, among the roughly forty people present alongside Anthony, we find his *écuyer tranchant*, his secretary,

⁹⁰ Chevalier-De Gottal, *Les fêtes*, pp. 40–2.

⁹¹ AGR, CC, 2.405, f. 197 v.; Kauch, 'L'organisation', pp. 195–6; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 165.

⁹² AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 182, 184.

⁹³ AGR, CC, 2.395, f. 166 r., 167 v., 169 v., 331 r.–v.; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 182.

⁹⁴ VH, pp. 316–17.

⁹⁵ De Raadt, 'La bataille', 12, pp. 241–2.

⁹⁶ AGR, CB, 5.273.

⁹⁷ AGR, CR, 2.963.

⁹⁸ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 280 et seq.

⁹⁹ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', p. 138.

his major-domo, a servant, his chamberlain and his confessor.¹⁰⁰ Members of the Household were present alongside the duke during his military operations. However, they did not form a small private army in the duke's service, nor did they form the nucleus of his troops. Their presence is explained rather by their performing services linked to their holding office in the duke's *Hôtel*.

The Ducal Council

If he was wise the duke would not make decisions on his own, but rather with the help of his counsellors, who formed the Ducal Council (*raet*).¹⁰¹ Developing from the *Curia Ducis*, it was only from the thirteenth century that certain of the ruler's familiars were described as 'counsellors'. At the start of the fourteenth century, the Ducal Council gained structure and organisation. In it, we find nobles, vassals of the duke or members of the administration. During the long reign of Joan, about fifty people were members at various times but a much more limited number, no more than a dozen, were genuinely active.¹⁰² The council was mobile and followed the duke or the duchess in their movements. While Anthony was governor, he had his own personal entourage, and two councils coexisted. The Ducal Council had a restricted scope, as the duchess had retired from the political life of the duchy. The Council of the governor was formed from a nucleus of five people, mostly from the entourage of Philip the Bold. In documents, they are never called 'counsellors of Brabant' but rather 'counsellors of Anthony'.

The Ducal Council was free to intervene at the request of the prince in any of his domains with the contentious exception of those feudal matters in which the Feudal Court had some jurisdiction. The duke seems to have appreciated the aid furnished by this institution and frequently had recourse to the Council in times of crisis. In 1378, Wenceslas summoned Renaud Berneau, seneschal of Fauquemont and one of his counsellors, to find means to end the disturbances that troubled the duchy.¹⁰³ During the wars against the duke of Guelders, Joan consulted the Council regularly.¹⁰⁴ The presence of the counsellors was sufficiently important that in 1331, John III refused to treat with the ambassadors of Liège since his counsellors were absent, even though the object of this visit was of the first importance since it concerned the re-establishment of peace in the region of Saint-Trond.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, on 26 February 1380, the duke refused to settle the date for an important meeting with the authorities of Leuven, because

¹⁰⁰ Boffa, 'Antoine', pp. 281–3.

¹⁰¹ Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 19 et seq.; Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 95–147; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 271–385; Croenen, 'Governing Brabant in the Twelfth Century'.

¹⁰² These were Bernard (I), lord of Bornival, John, lord of Bouchout, John of Corselaar, lord of Wittem, Gerard of Vorselaar and the successive receivers of Brabant.

¹⁰³ AGR, CB, 5.314.

¹⁰⁴ DD, III, pp. 131, 132; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, p. 830.

¹⁰⁵ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 107.

he had not his Council about him.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, in October 1398, during the conflict against the duke of Guelders, Joan summoned Paul of Haastrecht, *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch, a second time, because at his first visit she had not been able to give a satisfactory reply owing to the absence of her counsellors.¹⁰⁷ It is therefore not surprising to see them accompany the duke in wartime. When, in June 1372, Joan took part in the imperial expedition to free Wenceslas, she was accompanied *cum suis consiliariis*.¹⁰⁸

When a counsellor accompanied the duke on campaign, he received no indemnity for his costs. Such an indemnity was usually paid to counsellors present at court who had not taken the *livraisons*¹⁰⁹ to which they were normally entitled. No doubt, this is because during wartime the counsellors were present as vassals of the duke. In wartime, because of their social rank, the ducal counsellors were generally leaders of a *route*. There are many examples, from the war of the succession of Brabant to the *chevauchée* of Jülich. We may think particularly of the lords of Cranendonk, Gaasbeek, Perwez, Agimont and La Leck and Breda. Sometimes, counsellors were charged with more important missions. In 1387, several of them were among the garrison at Sinte-Oedenrode from where they organised the defence of the region.¹¹⁰ In May 1388, Renaud of Fauquemont and Henry (II) of Boutersem were chosen as captains and charged with the command of the Brabançon troops.¹¹¹ Finally, the counsellors were frequently the agents chosen to accomplish diplomatic missions in times of crisis. They often accompanied sovereigns at meetings of the Estates when the external politics of the duchy were in question.¹¹² They were ambassadors for Brabant,¹¹³ took part in negotiations,¹¹⁴ and concluded treaties in the name of the duke.¹¹⁵ If the worst came to the worst, when Brabant was divided by discord, they acted as intermediaries between the duke and his subjects. This was the case during the popular uprisings at Leuven, and when civil war was on the point of breaking out between Wenceslas and the Estates.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁶ AVL, 4.996 bis, f. 143 r.

¹⁰⁷ AGR, CR, 2.805.

¹⁰⁸ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 93.

¹⁰⁹ That is, board and lodging for his retinue and forage and bedding for his horses (Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 343 et seq.).

¹¹⁰ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 126.

¹¹¹ DD, III, pp. 123, 124.

¹¹² They were present at the meeting of 28 December 1378 intended to re-establish peace in Leuven (AVL, 4.996 bis, f. 48 v.) or during the meeting of 3 and 4 November 1381 where the attack by the Trudonaires against Brabant was discussed (AVL, 5.001, f. 25 v.).

¹¹³ In 1397, the regent of Hainault made known the peace treaty negotiated by him, at the instance of certain counsellors of Brabant and of Hainault, between Joan and Michel of Ligne, lord of Thumaide (AGR, CB, 7.032).

¹¹⁴ Before the second siege of Grave, the ducal counsel and the captains-general, counsellors themselves, negotiated with William I for the return of the town to Brabant (DD, III, p. 124).

¹¹⁵ For example, the treaty of 29 March 1357 by which Heusden passed under Holland control (Van Mieris, *Groot*, II, p. 867; BY, II, p. 537); the peace between Brabant and Liège negotiated in January 1371 (AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 91) or the peace prepared in June 1399 with the duke of Guelders (AGR, CC, 2.387, f. 8).

¹¹⁶ On 17 March 1373, the towns of Brabant demanded that the ducal counsel intervene with the duke (AVL, 4.997, f. 54 r.).

From the nature of their actions, it is difficult to form a precise idea of the role played by the Ducal Council during wartime. Apart from the consultative aspect, which we can only imagine as the archives do not speak of it, their actions are principally evident during the diplomatic phases of conflicts. We must conclude that this was their major role. It should be noted that the counsellors, as members of the Brabançon nobility and as vassals of the duke, sometimes occupied ducal offices and in that capacity made other military contributions. Such is the case for Bernard (I), lord of Bornival, ducal counsellor and *drossard* of Brabant, who fought against the Flemish during the war of the succession of Brabant.¹¹⁷ For this reason it is difficult to know in what capacity such a person was serving the duke. Certain of the counsellors seem to have been particularly appreciated by the duke and duchess. In some cases their aid was judged so important that Joan and Wenceslas did not scruple to infringe the *Joyeuse Entrée* for their sake.¹¹⁸ In effect, the document forbade strangers access to the Ducal Council. Even so, Gerard, count of Berg, and Robert of Namur – two men of war who had served Wenceslas well – made some appearances there.

The Ducal Council should not be confused with councils of war. In the latter, the commanders of the army discussed how best to pursue military operations, but this had nothing to do with advising the duke. As the counsellors were sometimes given military command, we may find them at such meetings. This was the case in 1356 before the battle of Scheut,¹¹⁹ or at the start of August 1371, when we find, in the company of Wenceslas and Joan, apart from their usual counsellors, all the officers of justice¹²⁰ and several officers of finance from the lands of Outre-Meuse. This was a council of war including all those responsible for the defence of the domains near to enemy territory.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 666–7.

¹¹⁸ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 141.

¹¹⁹ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 230; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 469–70.

¹²⁰ That is, the *drossards* of Limburg, Rolduc, Dalhem and Fauquemont.

¹²¹ AGR, CB, 2.867.

6

The Chain of Command

The hereditary officers

Introduction

Medieval institutions were complex and very different from those of modern times. We must make a clear distinction between hereditary officers and appointees. At the end of the fourteenth century, there were many hereditary high officials in Brabant: the Seneschal, the Marshal, the Chamberlain, the Butler, the Standard-Bearer and the Castellans of Brussels, Jodoigne and Antwerp.¹ All these positions were held in fief by important families from the Brabançon nobility. Ganshof has clearly shown that most of these offices are more ancient and were originally occupied by families of *ministeriales* who did not rise to the nobility until later.² The earliest texts that allude to ministeriality date from the end of the eleventh century.³ From the beginning of the twelfth century they became hereditary; in the twelfth and, above all, the thirteenth centuries, the *ministeriales* were most often designated *milites*, as were the noble vassals. Thereafter, in the second half of the thirteenth century, they were generally assimilated into the nobility or integrated with the urban patricians.⁴ The high rank of these functions led to the *ministeriales* constituting a class of unfree knights, whose social condition and way of life brought them close to the nobility, made up of free knights. Since the identical social status implied, at the time, identical legal status, the *ministeriales* as a class lost its unfree character and merged with the nobility. It seems that, of all the Lotharingian principalities, it is in Brabant that the *ministeriales* experienced its greatest development.

The hereditary seneschal

The scarcity of sources does not allow us to determine the precise moment of the creation of the office of *dapifer* or seneschal at the court of the Brabançon

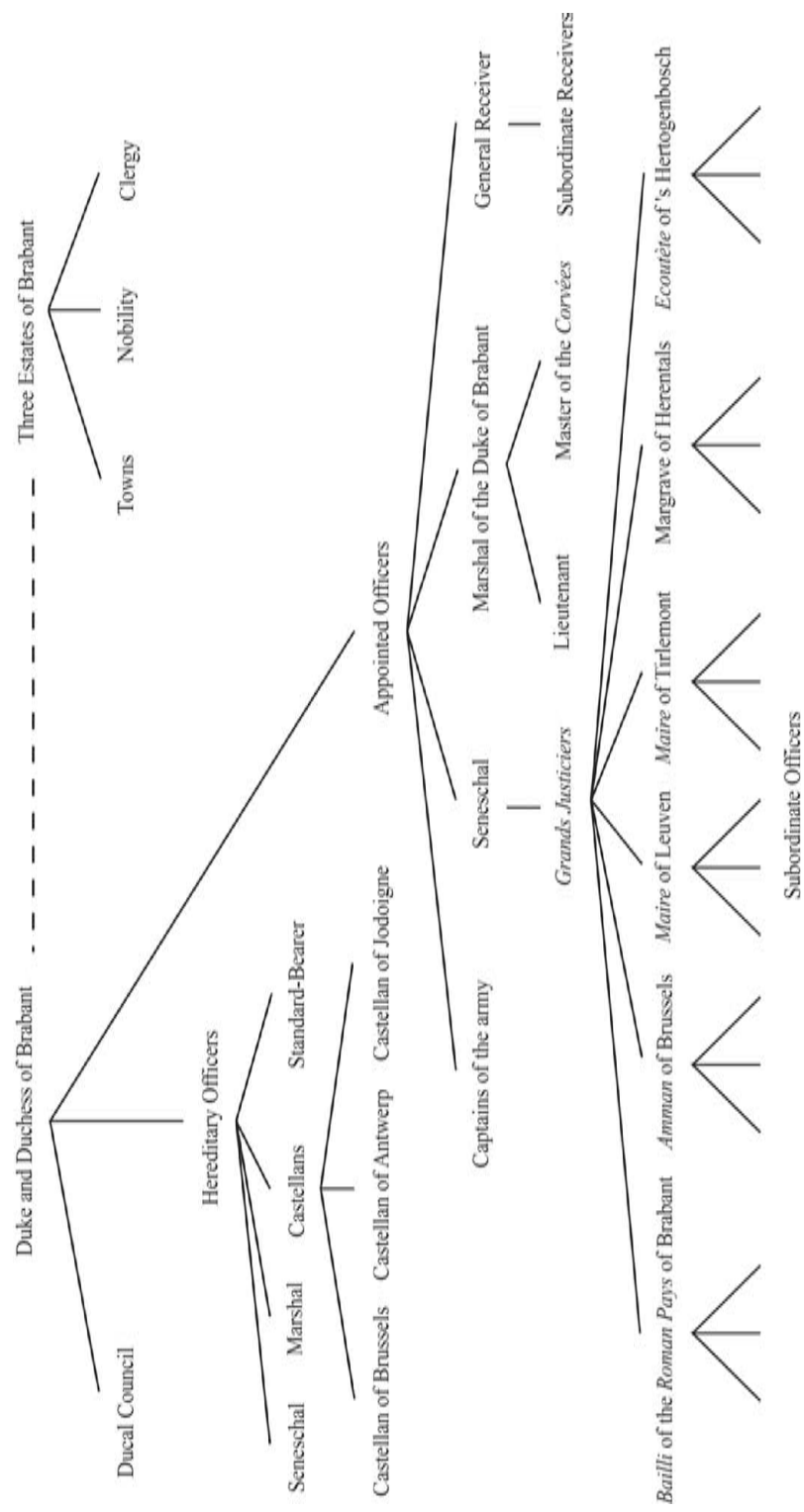
¹ Within the scope of this study, only some of these personages interest us: the Seneschal, the Marshal, the Standard-Bearer and the Castellans. Let us note at once the absence of a constable in Brabant.

² Ganshof, *Etude sur les ministeriales*; Croenen, 'Governing Brabant in the Twelfth Century'.

³ *Chronicon Affligemense*, pp. 414, 415, 416.

⁴ Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse', pp. 50–3. This process was gradual and a clear distinction was sometimes still made between nobles and *ministeriales* during the second half of the century. Thus, in the list of witnesses to an act of 1264, we have on the one hand the *gentilh home et home le duc*, and on the other hand the great families of *ministeriales* such as the Wezemaal or the Rotselaar (Poncelet, 'Une paix', pp. 280–1).

The Chain of Command



sovereign.⁵ The first reference to survive dates from 1107.⁶ Originally it seems that there were several *dapifers* in the *familia* of the duke.⁷ But for more than a century after this date, the seneschals were recruited exclusively from the family of Oppendorp-Rotselaar, and the function was undoubtedly hereditary.⁸ It was in 1227 that, for the first time since 1134, there appeared a seneschal not of the family of Rotselaar.⁹ From this moment on, the appearances of a second seneschal are more and more frequent.¹⁰ This 'new' dignitary was not slow to replace the 'hereditary' seneschal in all his activities except the exclusively ceremonial.¹¹ At the end of the first half of the thirteenth century, this change was complete. From 1245, when the two seneschals appeared in the same act, the hereditary seneschal would be termed seneschal of Rotselaar while the appointed seneschal would be termed 'our seneschal', 'seneschal of the duke' then 'seneschal of Brabant'.¹²

The family of Rotselaar, having entered the Brabançon nobility, would henceforth concentrate on administering its own lands. Originally, the seneschal's duty was to serve the prince at table. Thereafter, his authority would expand to cover all areas of administration. It is highly probable that the seneschal had many responsibilities and could be compared to a major-domo.¹³ As the actual service at the ducal table rapidly became a purely ceremonial duty, it figures among the obligations of the hereditary seneschal rather than the appointee. It seems, indeed, that this was the only official function that would remain to the hereditary seneschal.¹⁴ In contrast to the appointed seneschal, the hereditary seneschal never enjoyed any military role. With the exception of John (IV), lord of Rotselaar, who combined the offices of hereditary and appointed seneschal during the years 1416–18 and 1428–30.¹⁵ Nonetheless, the holders of that office, as vassals of the duke, took part in numerous diplomatic and military missions in the duke's service.¹⁶ Gerard (1265–1306), hereditary seneschal to John I, took part in the battle of Worringen.¹⁷ Let us note that the appointed seneschal remained in Brabant during this campaign. John (II) was a leader of troops at the battle of Baesweiler¹⁸ and John (IV) accompanied Anthony to Agincourt where he was taken prisoner by the English.¹⁹

⁵ Butkens, *Les trophées*, III, pp. 146–50; Ganshof, *Etude*, pp. 82–90.

⁶ De Marneffe, *Cartulaire*, I, p. 33.

⁷ In an act of 1134, we can read: 'S. Franconis castellani et dapiferi de Bruxella (. . .) S. Arnulfi dapiferi de Lovanio' (Miraeus and Foppens, *Opera*, I, p. 174).

⁸ Bonenfant, 'Notes sur l'origine des sénéchaux de Brabant'.

⁹ Theunissens, 'Documents', p. 82.

¹⁰ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, pp. 524–8.

¹¹ Ganshof, *Etude*, p. 87.

¹² Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 19.

¹³ Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 75–9, 128–31.

¹⁴ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 28.

¹⁵ AGR, CC, 12.530, ff. 98–105, 162–74.

¹⁶ De Ras, *Historische*, pp. 26–7.

¹⁷ VH, p. 171.

¹⁸ De Raadt, 'La bataille', 12, p. 80.

¹⁹ DD, III, p. 302.

The hereditary marshal

The marshal was originally no more than a servant in the stables placed under the authority of a constable. The political ascension of the latter explains the simultaneous growth in importance of the marshal. He finally became the master of the stables and carriages. The important part played by the cavalry in the military operations is another factor justifying the more and more important role of the marshal. The title of hereditary marshal of Brabant was passed down in the family of Wezemaal.²⁰ The appearance of the title of marshal is relatively late compared to that of seneschal, as it is not until the end of the thirteenth century that we see the members of this family so styled.²¹ Even so, it seems improbable that these functions would have been given to the family at such a late date, at a time when the Wezemaal were no longer *ministeriales*. It would be more in keeping with the development of ministeriality in general to conclude that the Wezemaal owed their elevation to their duties as marshal, and thus that they held the post earlier. Among the most illustrious representatives of this family, it is as well to mention Arnold (IV) of Wezemaal, who fought at Worringen²² before falling at the battle of Courtrai (1302) under the banner of Godfrey of Brabant,²³ and John, lord of Wezemaal, who commanded the vanguard of the Brabançon army which left to lay siege to Dordrecht in June 1418.²⁴ While the lack of documents prevents us from defining exactly the responsibilities of the marshal, a late document, unfortunately quoted without date by Butkens, shows us their variety:

In those days, it was for the marshal to punish the soldiers who failed in their duty and to judge their disputes. He was the first commissioner in peace treaties and at the counsel of war. He had to conduct the townspeople of Leuven, when they marched against the enemy, to one league from the town. He took care of munitions and military discipline. The suppliers of the army paid him a daily tribute of meat and peas. The abbey under his protection made him an annual present, one of a cow, another of hay, another of a hunting costume. He alone took all the livestock captured from the enemy and the third part of all ransoms. In the camp he could choose his own place freely. He received money for his provisions, cloth for his attire, the best horse after the duke, candles, gloves and many other things. At the end of the war he received all the clothing and wooden items from the duke's kitchen.²⁵

²⁰ Butkens, *Les trophées*, III, pp. 153–6; Schnerb, *L'honneur*, pp. 40–1.

²¹ De Troostembergh, *Chartes*, p. 53 (1264); Goetschalckx, 'Heeren', I, pp. 33–4 (1276); VH, pp. 11, 12, 27, 314 (1288).

²² VH, pp. 292–6.

²³ DD, II, p. 444.

²⁴ DD, III, p. 373.

²⁵ 'Au mareschal apartenoit autrefois de chatier les soldats qui manquoient à leur devoir et de décider leurs querelles. Il étoit premier commissaire aux traites de pais, et du conseil de guerre. Il devoit conduire les bourgeois de Louvain, qui marchaient contre l'ennemi, jusques à une lieuë de la ville. Il avoit soin des munitions et discipline militaire, et les vivandiers de l'armée lui payoient un tribut journalier de viande et de paix. Les abbayes, qu'il devoit protéger, lui faisoient annuellement present, l'une d'un boeuf, l'autre de foin, et l'autre d'un habit de chasse. Il jouissait seul de tout le bétail pris sur l'ennemi, et eut la troisieme part de toutes les rançons. Il choisissait au camp tel logement que bon lui sembloit; avoit les dépens

Furthermore, the hereditary marshal had under his orders the master of the *corvées* of Brabant. He thus played an important role in preparing and using means of transport in wartime.²⁶ These responsibilities are clearly inherited from his former domestic duties.

The hereditary standard-bearer

This function of standard-bearer or *guidon* appeared relatively late in the history of the duchy.²⁷ It is possible that the heroic conduct of William of Grimbergen, bearer of the ducal standard, during the war against the inhabitant of Staden (1234) is at the origin of the creation of this office.²⁸ We must wait until the battle of Worringen (1288) to see the first standard-bearer go into action. This was Rasse (VII or VIII) of Grave, lord of Liedekerke, who had the honour of bearing the banner of John I during this encounter since William of Asse was ill.²⁹ In the fourteenth century, the title of hereditary standard-bearer was passed down through the family of Asse.³⁰ Contrary to the previous examples, this family appears to have had no links to the *ministeriales*.³¹ It is important to emphasise that the seignior of Asse was a freehold neighbouring the abbey of Affligem, where the ducal banner was kept in times of peace. It seems that the family continued to fulfil this duty. Nowhere is there any mention of an 'appointed' standard-bearer. For example, at the battle of Scheut (1356), it was John (I) of Grimbergen, lord of Asse, who had this responsibility;³² while at Agincourt (1415), it fell to his nephew and successor, John (II) of Grimbergen, to fulfil this office *juris fuit ducum Brabancie vexillum deferre*.³³ Let us emphasise that at both these battles the attitude of the lords of Grimbergen was equivocal at best. One of the explanations advanced for the defeat at Scheut was the abandonment of the ducal banner by John (I), while in 1415 John (II) refused at the last moment to accompany Anthony and his few followers into battle. The duke's chamberlain, Gobelet Vosken, was hastily chosen to replace him.³⁴ We know that in 1388, during the siege of Gaasbeek by the Bruxellois, the latter demanded that the duchess send them the ducal standard.³⁵ If no mention of the lord of Asse is made on this occasion, it is probably because the expedition was carried out against one of his peers and he had no desire to become involved. Is the absence of an appointed standard-bearer connected with the occasional char-

de bouche à la Cour, du drap pour s'habiller, le meilleur cheval après le duc, chandelles, gands et plusieurs autres choses. La guerre finie il eut tout le linge et les meubles de bois de la cuisine du prince' (Butkens, *Les trophées*, III, p. 153; AGR, CF, 6, f. 39–40).

²⁶ Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 11 et seq.

²⁷ Butkens, *Les trophées*, III, pp. 156–62.

²⁸ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 158; De Ring, 'L'étendard', pp. 475–6.

²⁹ VH, pp. LIV, 178, 211–12; Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 31; Lehnart, *Die Schlacht*, p. 257.

³⁰ AGR, CF, 4, f. 45 v.; Galesloot, *Le livre*, p. 228.

³¹ Ganshof, *Etude*, p. 98.

³² DD, III, p. 26.

³³ DD, III, p. 301.

³⁴ Boffa, 'Antoine', pp. 278–9.

³⁵ DD, III, p. 122.

acter of this duty and the small responsibility that it entailed? Or because the lords of this family were granted this function relatively lately compared to the other hereditary offices of the duchy? The simplest explanation may be that there could in any case only be one banner of Brabant.

The hereditary castellans

One of the military duties that could be assigned to a *ministerialis* was the important function of castellan, that is, commander of a castle belonging to the ruler. This was the case throughout Germany, particularly in the Lower Rhine and the valley of the Moselle. In Brabant, three families held the post of castellan in a hereditary fashion.³⁶ The lords of Bouchout were hereditary castellans of Brussels,³⁷ the lords of Vorselaar the hereditary castellans of Jodoigne³⁸ and the lords of Diest, the hereditary castellans of Antwerp.³⁹ One cannot help noticing that there was no hereditary castellan of Leuven. The reason for this is sadly unknown to us. Only the castellans of Brussels can be placed with certainty among the *ministeriales*. Although the castellans held an honorary position, they still had certain responsibilities in wartime. The hereditary castellan of Brussels is a clear example. He was responsible for the defence of the palace and the town. He had command of the inhabitants. In 1386, John, lord of Bouchout, fought at the head of the Brussels militia at Grave.⁴⁰ It was he who, in the case of a 'common war', sounded the tocsin for one hour each day for forty days.⁴¹ On the march and in battle, he accompanied and protected the banner of the town with his vassals. At Worringen, because of the youth of the castellan, Gerard, lord of Marbaix, the banner of Brussels was carried by Arnold of Yssche.⁴² In the fifteenth century, the castellan was required to keep a dozen swordsmen about him, and for his expenses, he received 200 crowns from the city.⁴³ It is very likely that the other hereditary castellans had similar responsibilities. At Antwerp, for example, the lords of Diest were also charged with the defence of the castle and the town, and commanded the militia in wartime.⁴⁴ In contrast, the hereditary castellans of Jodoigne seem to have taken no interest in the responsibilities which fell to them according to their station. With the possible exception of the first castellans, they no longer lived in the castle, preferring to remain in their own lands of Vorselaar or Wijnegem. It was the receiver of the ducal domains who lived there and took care of the fortifications.⁴⁵

³⁶ Pouillet, *Histoire politique*, I, p. 156.

³⁷ Ganshof, *Etude*, pp. 119–24; Regnier, 'Un chevalier', pp. 81–5.

³⁸ Hanon De Louvet, *Histoire*, I, pp. 194–5.

³⁹ Prims, *Geschiedenis*, II/1, pp. 41–5; III, pp. 76–7; IV/1, pp. 114–15; V/1, pp. 170–3.

⁴⁰ DD, III, p. 113.

⁴¹ Later on, it would for the town to sound the tocsin. In recognition of the former rights of the castellan, the town would pay him a recompense of one pound of *vieux gros tournois*, on each of the forty days of the alarm.

⁴² Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 73.

⁴³ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 26–30.

⁴⁴ AGR, CB, 5.096, 5.097; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 499; I, preuves, p. 202.

⁴⁵ Hanon De Louvet, *Histoire*, I, pp. 194–5.

The appointed officers

Introduction

The ducal entourage included a certain number of officers who were appointed could be removed and whose duty was to assist in the government of the principality. I shall review the most important among them and make an especial study of their military duties. The hierarchy, if indeed there is one, that ordered these different personages is confused. At the summit of the judicial and administrative hierarchy, we find a category of officers still being subject to the authority of the central institutions of government. These were the 'superior officers' or *grands justiciers*, that is to say, the seneschal or *drossard*, the master of the woods and the *gruyer*. One of the articles of the confirmation of the charter of Cortenberg (17 September 1372) cites other important officers: the *drossard*, the receiver of Brabant, the *maire* of Leuven, the *amman* of Brussels, the *bailli* of the *roman Pays de Brabant*, the *margrave* of Rijen, the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch, the *maires* of Tirlemont, Léau and Vilvorde, the *écoutètes* of Lierre and Herentals, the *baillis* of Jodoigne and Hannut, the *maire* of Halen, and the receiver of these towns.⁴⁶ Apart from the *drossard*, who was a 'superior officer', and the receiver, this is essentially a list of *hauts justiciers*, key figures in the administrative hierarchy, and receivers. As well as these various officers, we will also discuss the marshal of the duke of Brabant and his lieutenant, the master of the *corvées* of Brabant, and the captains of the army. In this work, I do not address the question of appointed castellans as this subject has not been the object of any study and the sources concerning it are yet to be found.

The *drossard* or appointed seneschal

In 1227, there appears for the first time a *drossard* not from the family of Rotselaar⁴⁷ and from then on, the appearances of a second seneschal would become more and more regular. This appointed dignitary would replace the hereditary seneschal in all his activities save the purely ceremonial. It is not difficult to explain the appearance of the appointed seneschal. As Smolar-Meynart has judiciously remarked:

The appearance of this officer, who would assist the duke in the administration of the duchy, seems to be the logical conclusion of the system of *grands justiciers*, towards which Henry I had proceeded gradually since the beginning of his reign. This marks an evolution from authority in the direction of delegation of power.⁴⁸

The internal organisation of the *drossarderie* comprised a lieutenant, a clerk and some sergeants. From the fourteenth until the early fifteenth century, the

⁴⁶ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 32–44.

⁴⁷ Theunissens, 'Documents', p. 82.

⁴⁸ 'L'apparition de cet officier, qui allait seconder le duc, dans l'administration du duché, semble couronner fort logiquement l'instauration des grands justiciers, à laquelle Henry I^{er} avait procédé graduellement, depuis le début de son règne. Il marque une évolution de l'autorité dans le sens de la délégation de pouvoir' (Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, pp. 17–18).

principal duty of the lieutenant was to carry out summons, to make arrests and to undertake special missions. The clerk was charged with various duties involving writing. This did not prevent him from taking part in military expeditions. At least, this was the case for *Peter sdrossaten cleric*, who fought under the command of John of Godenaerts, seneschal, at Baesweiler.⁴⁹ According to Smolar-Meynart, this participation by members of the personnel of the *drossarderie* would vanish in the fifteenth century, as they had to maintain the continuity of the office in the absence of its holder.⁵⁰ The sergeants were men-at-arms at the disposal of the officer. As they numbered only a dozen, the seneschal would usually reinforce his troop as he judged necessary.⁵¹ The appointed seneschal progressively acquired vast powers. At the end of the thirteenth century, he was the second personage of the duchy. The duke kept the *drossard* closely associated to the exercise of power, and he was the supreme head of the administration and of justice. Later, some of these powers would be lost to new functionaries such as the receiver of Brabant or to institutions such as the Council of Cortenberg, but this would not prevent him from being a key figure in the administrative hierarchy. I shall not expand on the evolution of the office as it has already been very well studied and does not concern the object of this work.⁵² Let us concentrate on the military duties of the seneschal, as this aspect of this superior officer has not received all the attention that it merits.

Originally, the seneschal had no military function. At first, he was in charge of the ducal palace, and would later be responsible for the whole of the country. This responsibility explains why the seneschal, in the thirteenth century, would naturally take charge of the administration of the duchy, in the absence of the sovereign.⁵³ The *drossard* would for a long time be regarded as the legitimate substitute for the duke. This was still the case in 1394, when the town of Leuven demanded that the duchess leave the seneschal in Brabant when she departed for Hainault.⁵⁴ Uyttebrouck thinks that this was an administrative measure, while Smolar-Meynart holds that this request was to do with the military protection of the duchy, still threatened by Guelders. The former is in the right, as the second war of Guelders had finished long since and nothing presaged a new conflict with that principality.⁵⁵ As the seneschal held the lieutenancy of the duchy, he did not take part in ducal military expeditions. For example, at the battle of Worringen the *drossard* was absent. He remained in Brabant and governed the country in the absence of John I.⁵⁶ However, owing to this lieutenancy, he was

⁴⁹ AGR, CR, 3.002; CB, 3.664.

⁵⁰ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 432.

⁵¹ AGR, CC, 12.530, f. 147 v.; CC, 12.531, f. 18 r.-v., 26, 27, 66, 82, 115 r.-v.

⁵² De Reiffenberg, 'Château de Bouchout-lez-Bruxelles'; Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 75–9; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 225–7; Smolar-Meynart, *La justice ducale du plat pays*; Van Hemelryck, 'De drossaard van Brabant'.

⁵³ In the Walloon charter (1314), this lieutenancy is explicitly mentioned (Lousse, 'Les deux', p. 42).

⁵⁴ AVL, 5.004, f. 42.

⁵⁵ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 147; Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 421.

⁵⁶ VH, pp. 169–70.

responsible for the defence of the duchy, and it was probably this that led to military duties being gradually delegated to him.⁵⁷

The seneschal was charged with maintaining public order; this duty also may derive from his lieutenancy. He could order a local mobilisation.⁵⁸ He supported the *hauts justiciers* when they were unable to re-establish order. These police actions were sometimes carried out roughly and with large troops. Among these muscular police actions carried out by the *drossard*, there figure the repression of the urban sedition in 's Hertogenbosch in 1306,⁵⁹ the punitive expedition carried out against the abbey of Nivelles in 1342,⁶⁰ the intervention in Leuven in 1364⁶¹ and that against the inhabitants of Maastricht in 1403.⁶² We have already seen that the seneschal did not take part in the battle of Worringen. This does not mean that he never fought at the duke's side. In the time of John III, he was regularly mentioned as a leader of a *route*. In 1338, the seneschal was at the head of a small force. As the size of this contingent was of the same order as was those commanded by other leaders, the *drossard* seems to have had no special duty.⁶³ The same would be true in the second half of the fourteenth century, while the duke exercised the high command of the army. During the *chevauchée* of Baesweiler, John of Godenaerts was a simple leader of a *route*, at the head of sixty-one men-at-arms.⁶⁴ His military functions were then very limited. In 1334, when the duchy was attacked on several fronts, on the one hand Edward I, count of Bar, was charged with the defence of the western frontier and on the other hand the *maire* of Tirlmont protected the eastern frontier. The seneschal was given no particular command.⁶⁵

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the seneschal would be invested with greater powers. During the reign of Joan and Wenceslas, and especially during that of the widowed Joan, the seneschal was virtually the commander-in-chief of the ducal army. At the start of July 1371, the seneschal and Renaud Berneau, seneschal of Fauquemont, together led a *chevauchée* in the land of Heinsberg.⁶⁶ Five years later, at the head of the Brabançon contingent, the *drossard* joined the troops from Luxemburg commanded by the seneschal of that duchy in an expedition, with the intention of fighting a large company of 'Bretons'.⁶⁷ John of Wittem led the Brabançon army during almost the entirety

⁵⁷ The first known military intervention by a seneschal dates from 1279, during the conflict between the lord of Heusden and the town of 's Hertogenbosch. Even so, this mission already reveals certain characteristics of the lieutenancy (VH, pp. 40–3; Avonds and Brokken, 'Heusden', pp. 14–15).

⁵⁸ In 1401 the *écoutète* of Kempenland had the bell sounded on the orders of the *drossard* of Brabant (AGR, CR, 2.658).

⁵⁹ Van Den Heuvel, *De ambachtsgilden*, I, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Hoebanx, *L'abbaye*, pp. 267–9; De Liedekerke, *La Maison*, pp. 339–44.

⁶¹ Van Uytven, 'Peter', pp. 79, 88, 92.

⁶² AGR, CB, 7.451.

⁶³ AGR, CB, 503.

⁶⁴ AGR, CB, 3.178, 3.299, 3.363, 3.385, 3.392, 3.664, 3.721.

⁶⁵ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 151.

⁶⁶ AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 107; AVL, 4.995, f. 22 r.

⁶⁷ AGR, CLux, 1.204, 1.205.

of the second war of Guelders. He defended the northern frontier of the duchy, directed the first siege of the town of Grave, and, after the defeat at Ravenstein, in company with Henry of La Leck, he protected the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch.⁶⁸ In 1397, the seneschal was sent to 's Hertogenbosch to oppose the raids organised by the duke of Guelders.⁶⁹ It is worth noting that the seneschal, in the absence of the duke, was not automatically leader of the army. For example, in 1388, the second siege of Grave was directed by two captains chosen by the Estates: Renaud of Fauquemont and Henry (II) of Boutersem.⁷⁰

Smolar-Meynart explains this promotion as follows: as the *hauts justiciers* led into battle those men-at-arms in their jurisdiction who did not follow a vassal, it is logical to conclude that the seneschal, in his role as head of the *hauts justiciers*, came to command the whole of the contingent not led by a vassal, and then finally to command the host in general.⁷¹ While the author cites no source in support of this theory, a text of 1426 appears to confirm the hypothesis. At that date, John IV ordered the blockade of Antwerp and ordered John of Glimes, *drossard*, to enforce that decision. The mission was entrusted to him as he outranked all the other officers immediately about the duke, whose person he represented.⁷² I do not entirely share this idea. The seneschal had been the administrative superior of the *hauts justiciers* since the middle of the thirteenth century.⁷³ Why then did he not succeed to the general command until the end of the fourteenth century? The process began under the reign of Wenceslas and concluded under the reign of Joan. The former, being also duke of Luxemburg, was absent relatively frequently from the duchy; the latter never commanded the Brabançon army in person. Hence, it seems natural that the *drossard*, the second personage of the duchy, and charged with the lieutenancy of the duchy, should be found at the head of the Brabançon troops, in the absence of the duke or the duchess. Thereafter, from the reign of Anthony, a warrior prince, the seneschal would lose his military authority, and be principally occupied with the general administration of the duchy during the military expeditions led by the duke.⁷⁴ Until 1430, he would no longer intervene except indirectly in military expeditions commanded by other captains. During the campaign against Humphrey of Gloucester, the *drossard* was once more a simple leader of a *route*. The army was under the orders of the captains-general.⁷⁵

The administration of strongholds was another duty of the seneschal. The *drossard* was at times also castellan of one or more fortresses. Some of these served as prisons in the context of the exercise of his judicial functions.⁷⁶ Some

⁶⁸ DD, III, pp. 107–13, 125–6, 129–30.

⁶⁹ DD, III, pp. 129–30.

⁷⁰ DD, III, p. 123.

⁷¹ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, pp. 433–4.

⁷² AV Bergen-op-Zoom, *Commissie van Breda*, 327, ff. 154–7 r.

⁷³ Kerremans, *Etudes*, p. 332; Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, pp. 423–5.

⁷⁴ DD, III, pp. 167, 226, 300.

⁷⁵ DD, III, pp. 441–6.

⁷⁶ During the early 1400s, John, lord of Immerzeel was also castellan of Bolland and of Turnhout (AGR, CB, 7.192; Stroobant, *Le château*, p. 8) and, in 1406, Henry of Hornes was also castellan of Leuven and of Vilvorde (AGR, CB, 7.616).

examples show us that they inspected fortresses, checked their condition and had a voice in the selection of those responsible for holding certain of them. In 1232, Gautier, seneschal, in the company of Rasse of Gavre, Arnold of Walhain and Gautier of Pulle, visited the castle of Breda to determine the cost of its upkeep and spread the cost over the revenues of that seigniorship.⁷⁷ Later, in 1387, the seneschal confirmed the *écoutète* of Maasland in his keeping of the castle of Oss.⁷⁸ In the Burgundian period, he would continue to exercise a similar function.⁷⁹

The marshal of the duke of Brabant⁸⁰

The office of the 'marshal of the duke of Brabant' originated in the ducal palace.⁸¹ The evolution of this office was similar to that of the seneschal. However, it was not until the reign of John III that we find, alongside the marshal of the Household and the hereditary marshal, a marshal 'of the army' or 'of the duke of Brabant'.⁸² Unlike the other offices, the post of the marshal of the duke of Brabant was not permanent. It seems that the officer was chosen only for the duration of a particular campaign. He was demobilised once military operations and administrative works related to them had ended. This was the case for Gerard of Rotselaar, lord of Vorselaar, during the war of the succession of Brabant.⁸³ He would remain in place for two years after the end of hostilities so as to supervise the reimbursements for the losses of the men-at-arms.⁸⁴ It is important to note that this officer could be chosen from among foreign lords. During the first war of Guelders and the *chevauchée* of Baesweiler, the post was occupied by Robert of Namur.⁸⁵ Oddly, the office of marshal of the duke of Brabant disappeared shortly after 1370. After this date, the documents mention no new holder of the post. What is more, in 1381 the marshal of the Household took over some of his military duties.⁸⁶ Uyttebrouck gives no explanation for his sudden disappearance. I believe that the answer to this question is relatively simple: The growing importance of the appointed seneschal at the end of the reign of Wenceslas, and the fact that the post was temporary, account for its premature vanishing.

⁷⁷ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 73.

⁷⁸ AGR, CR, 2.784.

⁷⁹ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 438.

⁸⁰ According to Uyttebrouck, this official must be called the 'maréchal du duc de Brabant' and not 'maréchal de Brabant' as he was not a national or territorial dignitary but an agent of the prince (Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 230).

⁸¹ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 153–6; Guillaume, *Histoire*, pp. 36–7; Wauters, *Le duc*, p. 312; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 228–31; Schnerb, *L'honneur*, pp. 45–6.

⁸² AGR, CB, 467.

⁸³ This individual, although a member of the family of Rotselaar, never bore the title of hereditary seneschal. There is thus no question of plurality of functions as far as he is concerned (Ganshof, *Etude*, p. 88).

⁸⁴ The last mention of Gerard of Rotselaar as marshal dates from 2 September 1359 (AGR, CB, 1.846).

⁸⁵ AGR, CB, 2.604–2.617; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 23.

⁸⁶ AGR, CB, 5.733.

The military duties of the marshal of the duke of Brabant were varied. Unfortunately, the lack of documentation does not allow us to define them very precisely. He was responsible for the purchase of horses for the army.⁸⁷ This task was not unconnected to the traditional duties of this officer. Let us recall that, under the Carolingians, the *marescalci* were responsible for the stables. He was also responsible for the dispositions of the army on campaign. In 1340, for example, he determined the respective positions of the militias of Leuven and Brussels. The duke even declared that no one, not even himself, might occupy a position other than that assigned to him by the marshal.⁸⁸ During and after a war, he was responsible for the pay of the men-at-arms.⁸⁹ He was also responsible for the *restor* or reimbursing the losses of unfortunate combatants. Examples are numerous, as much during the war of the succession of Brabant⁹⁰ as during the *chevauchée* of Baesweiler.⁹¹ According to Guillaume, the marshal was the commander of the army on campaign.⁹² Smolar-Meynart shares this view, opining that the appointed seneschal and the marshal of the duke of Brabant shared the command of the army by turns, as was the case in France in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁹³

Unfortunately, this interpretation is based on the idea that John Clutinc was marshal of the duke of Brabant and not marshal of the Hôtel.⁹⁴ It is true that John Craye vander Hoffstat had indeed been appointed by John III to take command of the army. However, he was the first known holder of the office, and it is very likely that the duties associated with the post had not been clearly established at that time. The narrative sources, which speak so habitually of the leaders of the army, are mute as to any pre-eminent place occupied by any of his successors. What is more, they would have had a direct rival in the powerful seneschal. I do not think that the marshal of the duke was charged with any such responsibility during the second half of the fourteenth century. On the other hand, the marshal of the duke could, according to the circumstances, be effectively in command of a significant part of the army. During the *chevauchée* of Jülich, Robert of Namur may have commanded the vanguard.⁹⁵ This important position was not only part of the prerogatives of the marshal of the duke of Brabant, but also of similar officers in the neighbouring principalities.⁹⁶ It should be emphasised that the marshal of the duke of Brabant accompanied the ruler and exercised his functions even in expeditions that did not directly concern the future of the duchy of Brabant. So it was in the expedition to

⁸⁷ AGR, CB, 1.944, 1.995.

⁸⁸ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 116–18; DD, II, pp. 633–6.

⁸⁹ AGR, CB, 2.312.

⁹⁰ AGR, CB, 1.008, 1.010, 1.014 or 1.140.

⁹¹ AGR, CB, 5.419.

⁹² Guillaume, *Histoire*, pp. 36–7.

⁹³ Smolar-Meynart, *La justice*, p. 430; Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 74.

⁹⁴ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 170, 230.

⁹⁵ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 23.

⁹⁶ Schnerb, *L'honneur*, p. 115.

Chauny around 1364, when the officer was charged with reimbursing the men of Robert of Namur who had come to the aid of Wenceslas.⁹⁷

At the end of the thirteenth century, we find mention of an under-marshal or a lieutenant of the marshal.⁹⁸ In 1338, the Walter of Quadebrugghen was *coadjutoris* to John Craye vander Hoffstat.⁹⁹ Thereafter we must wait until 1368 for a similar figure to appear. Daniel of Seilles seconded Robert of Namur during the first war of Guelders and fulfilled some of his superior's duties. It was he that received the statements of those combatants who had suffered losses during the campaign.¹⁰⁰ The marshal of the duke did not therefore automatically have a lieutenant under his orders. As in 1338, Edward III had insisted that reimbursements for losses suffered by his men-at-arms should be paid in the month following the declaration of the losses, it was perhaps the importance of the task that led him to seek assistance. As for Robert of Namur, a foreigner in Brabant, he may have wished to have a trusted deputy, to whom he gave the title of lieutenant to justify his presence at his side. I have found no other mention of this personage.¹⁰¹

The *hauts justiciers*¹⁰²

The duchy was divided into six jurisdictions: the *ammanie* of Brussels, the *mairie* of Leuven, the *mairie* of Tirlemont, the *marquisat* of the land of Rijen or Herentals,¹⁰³ the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch and the *bailliage* of the *Roman Pays de Brabant* or of Nivelles. Each of these jurisdictions was governed by a *haut justicier*: the *amman* of Brussels, the *maire* of Leuven, the *maire* of Tirlemont, the *margrave* of Herentals, the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch and the *bailli* of Nivelles. These *hauts justiciers* were aided in their tasks not only by their subordinates but also by a specialised staff. A lieutenant would replace them in case of absence. A clerk took care of the keeping of accounts. The description by Kerremans leaves us to suppose that the latter, a man highly trusted by the *haut justicier*, accompanied him in wartime.¹⁰⁴ Some sergeants dealt with police missions and message bearing. As of 1292, their number was limited. The *amman* of Brussels had the right to use five horsemen and ten footmen; the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch and the *maire* of Tirlemont, four

⁹⁷ The exact date of this expedition is not known (De Raadt, 'Liste', pp. 150–1).

⁹⁸ The account of the *amman* of Brussels for 1286 mentions *Nicolaus submarescalcus* and *Clausekin submarescalcus* (AGR, CR, 2.602; Wauters, *Le duc*, p. 312).

⁹⁹ Wauters, 'La formation', pp. 204–5.

¹⁰⁰ AGR, CB, 2.604–2.617.

¹⁰¹ Verkooren holds that John of Godenaerts occupied the post of marshal or of lieutenant to the marshal during the war of Heinsberg but, in fact, he held the post of seneschal (Verkooren, *Chartes . . . Brabant*, 1^{ère} part., VII, p. 195; AGR, CB, 5.159; CC, 2.352, f. 9; Gemeentearchief 's Hertogenbosch, charter 216).

¹⁰² Kerremans, *Etude sur les circonscriptions judiciaires*.

¹⁰³ This was the new designation of the marquisate of Antwerp following the passage of the town and the seigniorship of Antwerp to Flemish control in 1357.

¹⁰⁴ Kerremans, *Etude*, pp. 320–7.

horseman and eight footmen; the *bailli* of Nivelles, three horsemen and six footmen; and the *bailli* of Jodoigne, only two horsemen and four footmen.¹⁰⁵

As the *justiciers* were the central figures in the administration of the duchy, their military duties were important and varied.¹⁰⁶ They were responsible for the defence of the territory under their jurisdiction. During the war of the succession of Brabant, Henry of Beaurieu, *bailli* of Nivelles, kept guard over the *pays*.¹⁰⁷ In 1388, the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch, organised the defence of the northern frontier.¹⁰⁸ And, in 1404, Anthony ordered Rasse of Grez, *maire* of Leuven, to prevent, by force, the enemies of the duchess from committing damage within the limits of his territory.¹⁰⁹ The *justicier* was also responsible for the security of the roads. Thus, he organised itineraries and oversaw the movements of the men-at-arms in his jurisdiction.¹¹⁰ He provided escorts to protect the powerful in their movements about the duchy.¹¹¹ While the *haut justicier* did not normally have the guard of the fortresses, he did inspect them and submit a report to the duke. In 1318, John III, after a report presented to him by Roger of Leefdaal, *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch, authorised the *échevins* and councillors of that town to pursue works of fortification judged necessary for the defence of the inhabitants.¹¹² He was also charged with checking the state, equipment and provisioning of the strongholds possessed by the local lords. In December 1415 and April–June 1416, the *écoutète* of Antwerp visited, on the orders of the duke, the castles, including those of the *smael heren*, within his jurisdiction, and verified the state of the walls and the provisions.¹¹³ He also oversaw the carrying out of fortification works. In 1410–11, during the conflict which opposed Malines to Antwerp, Anthony ordered his *écoutète* of Antwerp to have constructed at Boom, on the banks of the Rupel, a fortified position intended to cut off the access of the port of Malines to the estuary of the Scheldt.¹¹⁴ In 1427, John IV ordered the *écoutète* and the *échevins* of 's Hertogenbosch to fortify the freehold of Oss.¹¹⁵

In wartime, the *haut justicier* was charged to carry a declaration of war to the enemies of the duchess.¹¹⁶ He directed the mobilisation of the combatants – the urban militias and the vassals of the duke – in his jurisdiction. In 1286, Henry Leuken, *amman* of Brussels, asked the lord of Grimbergen to assemble his men;¹¹⁷ in 1366, Libert of Liroux, *bailli* of Nivelles, organised the gathering of

¹⁰⁵ Over the course of time, these numbers varied, but only by ones and twos (VH, pp. 541–54; BY, I, pp. 768–9; Prims, 'Antwerpsche', p. 64).

¹⁰⁶ Kerremans, *Etude*, pp. 214–48.

¹⁰⁷ AGR, CB, 1.704.

¹⁰⁸ DD, III, p. 123.

¹⁰⁹ AGR, CC, 11, f. 178 v.

¹¹⁰ AGR, CR, 2.329.

¹¹¹ AGR, CR, 2.664.

¹¹² AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 274; CC, 3, f. 98.

¹¹³ AGR, CC, 12.974, f. 3 v.

¹¹⁴ DD, III, p. 189; BY, III, p. 104.

¹¹⁵ AGR, CC, 10, f. 505 v.

¹¹⁶ In 1397, the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch was responsible for this mission (AGR, CR, 2.802).

¹¹⁷ AGR, CR, 2.602.

the host¹¹⁸ and in 1397, John, *maire* of Leuven, sounded the mobilisation bell, as the country was at war against the duchy of Guelders.¹¹⁹ To this end, he prepared the orders for mobilisation and oversaw their distribution.¹²⁰ The clerks must no doubt have played an important role in this operation. At that time, only formal leave obtained from the duke or from a *haut justicier* allowed one summoned to excuse him.¹²¹ He was also charged with checking the condition of the combatants. For this, musters were organised, at which the presence of those summoned and the condition of their equipment were verified. In 1286, the *amman* of Brussels (Henry Leuken) imposed a fine on someone who had no horse and in 1335, he (John of Heiden) taxed a person without sufficient equipment.¹²²

The *hauts justiciers* were also fighters. They commanded a part of the ducal contingent. This was probably the case during the war of the succession of Brabant;¹²³ it was certainly true during the *chevauchée* of Jülich¹²⁴ and the second war of Guelders.¹²⁵ Should they be unable to carry out their duty, they were replaced by trusted men.¹²⁶ The composition of the *route* under the orders of a *haut justicier* was slightly different from others. He led to war those vassals of the duke who did not owe allegiance to a particular lord. As he commanded by virtue of his function rather than in his own right, the notion of submission between the leader and the men-at-arms in his *route* disappeared. During the expedition of Jülich, a man-at-arms, describing his service in the *route* of Renaud Berneau, seneschal of Fauquemont, indicated that he rode ‘with him’ and not ‘under him’.¹²⁷ In certain cases, the *haut justicier* occupied a more elevated place in the military hierarchy. He could at times be placed at the head of a large troop and entrusted with a particular mission. This was the case in 1385, when Paul of Haastrecht, *écouteur* of ’s Hertogenbosch, commanded the contingent whose mission was to supply the castles of Ammerzoden and Middelaar.¹²⁸ Though such a post was more important, we should not regard the *haut justicier* as the leader of the army. He remained under the authority of the seneschal, which however did not prevent him from directing, locally, military operations on a larger scale than those entrusted to a simple leader of a *route*.

After having reviewed the various military duties of the *hauts justiciers*, it is not surprising to observe that in wartime they managed a significant portion of the military expenses.¹²⁹ They dealt with the seizure of enemy goods. For

¹¹⁸ AGR, CR, 2.745; CB, 2.371.

¹¹⁹ AGR, CR, 2.680.

¹²⁰ AGR, CR, 2.602.

¹²¹ VH, pp. 541–54.

¹²² AGR, CR, 2602, 2.603.

¹²³ AGR, CB, 1.187.

¹²⁴ Van Oeteren, ‘Recrutement’, pp. 165 et seq., 211–14.

¹²⁵ AGR, CB, 6.504.

¹²⁶ In August 1388, John Clutinc, *bailli* of the *roman pays* of Brabant, was replaced by John t’Seraernts (AGR, CB, 6.431).

¹²⁷ AGR, CB, 2.911.

¹²⁸ DD, III, p. 112.

¹²⁹ This division of the costs is clearly attested to by an account from the *recette générale*. The rubric concerning the expenses of the first war of Guelders includes the payments of the

example, in 1372, Philip of Udekem, called of Tudeken, confiscated the sums due to people from Jülich, a territory that had become an adversary of Brabant.¹³⁰ The *hauts justiciers* were also charged with raising certain local taxes, such as the *glaviegelt*, intended to sustain the war effort.¹³¹ After the war, their duties included paying the sums due to the duke's men-at-arms,¹³² and various transactions linked to the reimbursement of the sums of the losses of certain combatants.¹³³ In these conditions, according to the administrative habits of the time, the duke often found himself indebted to his *hauts justiciers*. For example, in 1357, Gerard vander Elst acknowledged the receipt from the duke and duchess of the sum of what he had lent to them during the war of the succession of Brabant, when he had exercised the functions of the *écoutète* of Antwerp.¹³⁴

Since the late thirteenth century, each *mairie* of the duchy was divided into smaller units called *mairie*. Each one was headed by a subordinate under the orders of the *haut justicier*. These subordinates usually worked under their direct superior, but at times, they acted directly under the orders of the duke and his council.¹³⁵ The subordinates had the same responsibilities as the *hauts justiciers*. As the military duties of the latter were important and varied, by a process of delegation of power so were those of their subordinates. They were also charged with organising the defence of the land.¹³⁶ They took part in the mobilisation of troops.¹³⁷ They verified that everyone fulfilled their military obligations.¹³⁸ They organised the movements of men-at-arms.¹³⁹ They gathered intelligence about the enemy.¹⁴⁰ During military expeditions, they served among the *route* of their superior. This was the case in, for example, the *chevauchée* of Jülich when John of Relegheem led, among his *route*, four of the six subordinates of the *ammanie* of Brussels: the *maire* of Campenhout, the *maire* of Vilvorde, the *maire* of Asse and the *maire* of Merchtem.¹⁴¹ In some cases, they were even in command of small detachments and responsible for missions of greater or lesser importance. In 1387, the *écoutète* of Maasland directed a *chevauchée om in den lande van Ghelre scade te doen*.¹⁴² The next year, the *écoutète* of Peelland joined the main body of the army with 400 men-at-arms at his orders.¹⁴³ In 1388,

general receiver, *exceptis tamen aliis diversis custibus et precibus solutis per dominum ducem et per justiciarios Brabantie et alios diversos financieros* (AGR, CC, 2.355, f. 109).

¹³⁰ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 139.

¹³¹ AGR, CB, 1.866; CR, 962, 2.260.

¹³² AGR, CB, 1.191 or 2.570.

¹³³ AGR, CB, 1.555, 1.677, 4.643 or 5.371.

¹³⁴ AGR, CB, 1.499, 1.677, 1.704.

¹³⁵ AGR, CC, 5, f. 43.

¹³⁶ AGR, Mss. div., 33, f. 45 v.

¹³⁷ AGR, CR, 2.602.

¹³⁸ AGR, CR, 2.347.

¹³⁹ AGR, CB, 4.965.

¹⁴⁰ AGR, CR, 2.787.

¹⁴¹ De Raadt, 'La bataille', 12, pp. 77–8.

¹⁴² AGR, CR, 2.784.

¹⁴³ AGR, CR, 2.785.

during the siege of Grave, the *écoutète* of Maasland was charged with the control and the security of the roads leading to the town, so as to protect the supply convoys.¹⁴⁴ As with the other officers, the subordinates were surrounded by a staff, who also took part, directly or indirectly, in military operations. For example, in 1390, the clerk of the *écoutète* of Lierre presented himself before the seneschal, so as to explain to him the state of the defence of the land of Breda.¹⁴⁵

The receiver of Brabant

This officer was not really a part of the chain of command.¹⁴⁶ However, the important financial duties for which he was responsible made him a significant figure in wartime. For example, the receiver sometimes collected directly the sums owed in amends by vassals who had not fulfilled their military service.¹⁴⁷ By contrast, he played no role in the levying of extraordinary aids, as this task was entrusted to particular receivers.¹⁴⁸ Under the government of Anthony, he was responsible for paying the expenses of the duke and his entourage during wartime. In peacetime, he had only to pay the expenses of the ducal palace.¹⁴⁹ Also under the Burgundian reign, he inspected the strongholds of the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse, and made an inventory of the goods that were kept there and their means of defence.¹⁵⁰ These inventories were kept in the *Chambre des Comptes*, as the officers placed at the head of the fortresses were liable to surrender the place and all its contents at the order of the duke.¹⁵¹ We do not know if this was already the case under the reign of Joan and Wenceslas. It seems that the receiver served the duke during his expeditions, as did the other high officers of the duchy. On 14 September 1338, Leon van der Borch promised to follow John III with three men throughout the duration of the war between France and England.¹⁵² It is, however, likely that this participation was unusual, as neither Alard of Oss, during the war of succession of Brabant, nor Godfrey of la Tour during the *chevauchée* of Jülich, are mentioned among the many receipts for reimbursement concerning these two conflicts.¹⁵³ The subordinate receiver, by the same token as the receiver, undertook missions of a military nature from time to time. These either concerned the management of the goods kept in the fortresses¹⁵⁴ or were of a financial nature.¹⁵⁵ These latter examples concern functionaries working during the time of Anthony. The

¹⁴⁴ AGR, CR, 2.785.

¹⁴⁵ AGR, CR, 2.332.

¹⁴⁶ Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 79–256; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 232–64.

¹⁴⁷ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 13.

¹⁴⁸ Moureaux-Van Neck, 'Un aspect', pp. 79 et seq.

¹⁴⁹ AGR, CC, 45.673, f. 22.

¹⁵⁰ AGR, CC, 11, f. 223.

¹⁵¹ AGR, CC, 45.673, f. 2 r.–v., 10; CB, 7.672.

¹⁵² AGR, CB, 545; Martens, *L'administration*, p. 106.

¹⁵³ In 1371, Godfrey, son of the then general receiver, fought in the *route* made up of the *huusgesinde* of the duke (AGR, CB, 4.422; AVL, 6.486, f. 29).

¹⁵⁴ AGR, CB, 7.700.

¹⁵⁵ AGR, CC, 45.673, f. 91 v.

administrative reforms undertaken by that prince, from the beginning of his reign, and the peculiar situations of the fortresses of the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse, are perhaps the reasons for this novel responsibility. During the time of Joan and Wenceslas, it was for the seneschal or the *hauts justiciers* to carry out this kind of mission.

The master of the *corvées*

The post of master of the *corvées* dates back at least to the reign of John II.¹⁵⁶ This officer seems to have been specific to the duchy and to have had no equivalent in the neighbouring principalities.¹⁵⁷ He appears rather as a particular receiver, whose duty was to direct the offerings of carts due to the duke from the abbeys. He was also charged to collect the sums destined for the repurchase of these *corvées*. Naturally, it was to him that appeals were made for information or in case of disputes over the services to be offered. On 24 November 1411, the *Chambre des Comptes* sent a note to the ducal council, saying that they were unable to provide a list of those who ought to supply horses during the duke's military expeditions, and suggesting that the council address itself to the clerk of the master of the *corvées* or to the duke's *fourrier*, who would be better informed.¹⁵⁸ In peacetime, when the duke decided to undertake a journey, it was the duty of the master of the *corvées* to procure the necessary means of transport. Among these, we find in a prominent place the carts of the abbeys. He was also responsible for the organisation of the carriage destined for works to be done on the ducal fortifications. On 17 August 1406, Anthony warned the master of the *corvées* that he had ordered the castellan of Tervuren to carry out certain works on the castle entrusted to his keeping. He therefore ordered that the monasteries be warned to provide the necessary carriage.¹⁵⁹ In case of war, his task was much more important. The master of the *corvées* was under the orders of the hereditary marshal.¹⁶⁰ While this subordination is clear at the end of the thirteenth century, we may nevertheless ask ourselves whether or not the marshal of the duke of Brabant replaced the hereditary marshal in this function during the course of the fourteenth century.

The captains of the army

In both the administrative and the narrative sources, a strange figure appears by the name of captain. Unfortunately, more than one officer was so titled. Because 'captain' derives from the Latin word *caput*, all those at the head of a group would enjoy such a title. According to the circumstances, we have to deal with captains of the army, general captains, captains of troops, captains of the militia, captains of communes, etc. It is therefore necessary to be prudent in using the

¹⁵⁶ Gorissen, 'De karweien der Brabantsche'. The accounts of the *wagenmeester* for 1388 to 1401 have been preserved (AGR, CR, 2.499–2.518).

¹⁵⁷ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ AGR, Chartes div., 24 November 1411.

¹⁵⁹ AGR, CC, 11, f. 277.

¹⁶⁰ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 11.

quotations from the archives. I shall nevertheless try, given the sparse information, to gain a better understanding of this figure.

The captains of the army, like the marshal of the duke of Brabant, held the position only for the duration of a single campaign. They were elected at the beginning of the military operations. Sometimes rather late, as in 1397 and 1398, when they were chosen only after leaving Maastricht at the moment when the host entered enemy territory. Several people could hold the post, the usual number being two.¹⁶¹ They occupied a superior position in the military hierarchy, as they exercised command over the army. In collaboration with the *hauts justiciers*, they could order the mobilisation of troops. In 1398, the *écoutète* of Kempenland, sounded the bell on the orders of the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch and of Henry of La Leck.¹⁶² In 1388, the two captains of the army had to defend the land of Brabant and cause as much damage as possible to the Gueldrois adversary.¹⁶³ In 1398, it was they that took all the strategic decisions.¹⁶⁴ The captains enforced discipline.¹⁶⁵ Sometime, they negotiated with the enemy.¹⁶⁶ This is all the information provided by sources.

One particular case deserves to be highlighted. On 4 April 1357, Wenceslas and Joan named Nicolas, lord of Septfontaines and Cranendonk, captain of the town of Lierre. They ordered that all those then within the town and all who arrived there should obey all his commands, in view of the present war.¹⁶⁷ What office are we discussing here? It is manifestly not the captaincy of the army. Nor is it a captaincy of towns, as Nicolas had not been named by the Magistracy. Once more, the rarity of sources does not allow us to answer the question. Under the reigns of Joan's successors, the post of captain of the army would increase in importance. There would even be the appearance of general captains¹⁶⁸ while Philip of Saint-Pol would be named supreme captain.¹⁶⁹ It seems to me that the development of the function of the captain of the army, as well as the creation of general captains, must be linked to the loss of power of the seneschal.¹⁷⁰ This hypothesis seems to be confirmed when, in May 1425, Thomas (II), lord of Diest and several other persons were ordered to keep to the council chamber at Brussels and to look over all the cases until his the duke's return to Brabant. As Thomas (II) had been named captain-general a few months beforehand, although he was not alone in holding the post, he strongly resembles the seneschal, at once lieutenant of the duke and leader of the army.

¹⁶¹ DD, III, pp. 132, 135.

¹⁶² AGR, CR, 2.655.

¹⁶³ DD, III, pp. 125–6.

¹⁶⁴ DD, III, pp. 138 et seq.

¹⁶⁵ DD, III, p. 132, 139.

¹⁶⁶ DD, III, p. 124.

¹⁶⁷ AGR, CB, 1.079.

¹⁶⁸ BY, III, pp. 570–1; DD, III, p. 443.

¹⁶⁹ AGR, CB, 8.312; DD, III, p. 442.

¹⁷⁰ BY, III, pp. 591–2.

The Three Estates of Brabant

Introduction

By the second half of the fourteenth century, the *pays* of Brabant¹ had managed to obtain a certain degree of control over the exercise of power by the duke and his entourage.² The most striking evidence of this political rise is the oath of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, which Joan and Wenceslas were obliged to swear to on their accession to power. Nonetheless, in order for this document to have any significance, it was necessary that someone or some organisation should ensure its application. This institution would be known at the start of the fifteenth century under the names of the ‘three Estates of Brabant’ or the ‘Estates of Brabant’ (*tres Status Brabancie, drie Staten*). In it, we find representatives of the towns and freeholds of the duchy, the nobility and the clergy. They met regularly to discuss all the business of the duchy, and were particularly concerned with all aspects of ducal politics. The Estates were intensely active. Uyttebrouck has gathered, from the few available archives, the impressive number of 1,610 meetings during the period from 1356 to 1430.³ The matters dealt with during these meetings were varied. There were discussions of internal and external politics, general affairs, the raising of special subsidies, monetary and financial problems etc.

The Estates had real power, and played more than a merely consultative role. It was not uncommon for them to oppose the duke’s decisions and, in the end, to impose their own will. It suffices to recall the difficult years of 1372–74, when the duchy was close to civil war or Wenceslas’s inability to develop a coherent monetary policy owing to their interference.⁴ In the fourteenth century, the towns had begun to play a prominent political role. They were the most important element of the Estates, and often met alone. Rather than trying to obtain power in their own right, they appealed to the general interest (*Algemeen Belang*) and in the case of an internal crisis or of weakness of the ducal power, it was therefore normal to see the Estates or simply the towns take the reins of power. If we linger over the activities of the Estates, we note that they were particularly intense during the war of the succession of Brabant after the defeat at Baesweiler, when

¹ On the difficulties in defining the terms *pays* and *commun pays*, see Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 447–8.

² Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 191–231; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 429–69.

³ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 773–909.

⁴ Piot, ‘Discussion entre le duc Wenceslas et les Etats de Brabant’; Laurent, *La loi de Gresham*.

Anthony decided to make himself master of Luxemburg (1413–14), and during the years when John IV opposed the *pays* (c. 1420). This suffices to demonstrate their political importance in times of crisis. Let us review their interventions and the role played by the Estates while the duchy was at war.

The three Estates and warfare

The Estates and the security of the duchy

The Estates were particularly concerned with the security of the duchy and of its inhabitants. In 1369–70, they played a principal role in the negotiations between the duke and the representatives of the town and country of Liège. Thanks to their mediation, a new war between the principalities was avoided.⁵ In February, March and April 1373, the towns met frequently with Wenceslas and Joan. These meetings were concerned with the enormous debts that the duke owed in reimbursement of the losses suffered by the men-at-arms who had accompanied him in Jülich. The Estates feared that those owed might reimburse themselves by attacking the inhabitants of the duchy and confiscating their goods.⁶ These fears were well founded. In April 1373, the towns of Brabant communicated with the towns of Liège, demanding that the latter should ensure that the knights and squires of Liège who had been in Jülich should not make good their losses by ransoming Brabançons.⁷ This problem was more important than it might seem, and did not cease to poison the diplomatic relations between the two principalities. In November 1377, Brussels and Leuven once again begged Wenceslas to fix a date for the payment of the men of Liège who had suffered losses with him at Baesweiler.⁸ The matter was raised again in March 1382.⁹ It was not uncommon for them to put pressure on the duke so that the latter's acts should not draw the duchy into another conflict. In May 1394, Leuven demanded that Joan ensure that no disagreement should spring up between her and Albert of Bavaria, count of Hainault and Holland.¹⁰ Again, in 1408, the towns suggested to Anthony that he should not involve himself in the conflict between the land of Liège and the town of Maastricht.¹¹

The involvement of the Estates in ducal politics and their willingness to serve the general interest or their own rather than the ambitions of the prince were such that, in defence of their cause, they were ready to take up arms against the own ruler. We have a fine example in July 1388. That year, Charles VI, king of France, and his counsellors had decided to set out to punish the recalcitrant duke of Guelders. They chose the most rational itinerary for their troops. The army was to pass by the plains of Picardy, Thiérache and Hainault. Brabant being

⁵ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 240 et seq.

⁶ AVL, 4.997, f. 49, 52, 55, 56; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, p. 88.

⁷ AVL, 4.997, f. 56; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, p. 88.

⁸ AVL, 4.996, f. 243.

⁹ AVL, 5.001, f. 60.

¹⁰ AVL, 5.003, f. 117.

¹¹ AVL, 5.009, *sub data*.

reached, they were to follow the ancient Roman road, parallel to the Meuse, as far as Maastricht, which lay at the gates of the duchy of Jülich.¹² When the Estates learned of this, they informed Joan that they were ready to abandon the protection of the northern frontier of the duchy and take up arms against the royal army. It was out of the question for any troops, even an allied one, to traverse the duchy and lay waste the land. The duchess had little choice; she sent John of Ophem, John of Grave and Nicolas of la Monnaie to make known the hostile attitude of the Estates towards the French plan.¹³ The duke of Burgundy, who was behind the project, was put on the spot. He managed to impose a new itinerary; the host would reach the duchy of Jülich, not without difficulty, by passing through the dower lands of Joan and the duchy of Luxemburg, through the thick forest of Ardennes.¹⁴

The Estates and diplomacy

As we can easily guess, the Estates participated in the various phases of diplomacy. They were kept informed of the preliminary encounters and followed the negotiations most closely. For example, in January 1389, on the eve of important negotiations, Joan convoked the towns of Brabant so as to inform them of the proposals that the duke of Guelders had sent to the arbitrators.¹⁵ Sometimes they acted as a veritable second authority at the head of Brabant. This attitude did not simplify the work of foreign emissaries who no longer knew with whom to deal. It goes without saying that such a situation also discredited the reputation of the duke. Unfortunately, it was difficult and sometimes impossible for him to act in opposition to the Estates. The first manifestation of the parallel power exerted by the Estates took place during the war of the succession of Brabant. After the initial invasion of the duchy by the Flemish, Wenceslas decided to negotiate personally with Louis of Male. The duke was ready to make enormous concessions and undertook before the count of Flanders to make the Brabançons accept them. Unfortunately for Wenceslas, the *commun pays* (*gemeen land*) was categorically opposed to his policy. The Brabançon representatives who had seconded the duke in the negotiations at Asse were arrested and the duke's decisions were annulled.¹⁶

The new duke should have been more careful of the independent attitude of the towns and the need to make them his allies. His wise predecessor, John III, in one of the documents sealed with the king of France at the conventions of Saint-Quentin (1347), stated clearly that he would use all his influence over the towns of Brabant to make them accept and confirm the treaty.¹⁷ This was not exceptional. In the important treaty of 1339 with Flanders and that of 1347 with Liège, the towns had also played a prominent part.¹⁸ Wenceslas understood his

¹² *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, I, pp. 528–30.

¹³ AGR, CC, 8.783, f. 44; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 182, 187.

¹⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 188; *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, I, p. 528.

¹⁵ AVL, 5.002, f. 71 v.

¹⁶ Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 93.

¹⁷ Laurent, 'Les conventions', p. 144.

¹⁸ Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 224–7.

lesson well. A short while later, in 1358–59, while he was trying to ally himself with Edward III of England so as to put pressure on the count of Flanders, the towns actively took part in the debates.¹⁹ Sometimes, they could even seal treaties. In September 1390, the duchess asked them to add their seal to the peace treaty that she had just signed with the duke of Guelders.²⁰ Finally, the dukes or the duchess had to give accounts to them. John III promised to inform his subjects regarding the conventions of Saint-Quentin (1347).²¹ In October 1386, the conclusion of an initial peace with the duke of Guelders was announced to the prelates, barons and towns of Brabant.²² On 14 June 1399, Joan explained to the towns upon what basis peace had just been made with the duke of Guelders.²³

The Estates and foreign powers

The Estates or certain of their members considered themselves sufficiently important to act independently, with or without the duke's approval. In July 1356, the town of Brussels sent a messenger to John II, king of France.²⁴ These negotiations must surely have concerned the succession of John III and the risk of war between the duchy of Brabant and the county of Flanders. On 4 December 1371, a time of crisis, the towns of Brabant appealed on their own initiative to the count of Flanders.²⁵ The message that was delivered could only concern the captivity of the duke and must be considered in the light of the failure of negotiations between the duchess and the Estates. On 7 December, Louis of Male convoked the representatives of the Brabançon towns at Ghent.²⁶ This episode clearly shows how the Estates, or at least the towns, could act against the wishes of their sovereign in certain critical circumstances. Fortunately, the situation was not always so tense. Even while the towns negotiated in their own name, they did so with the agreement of the duke. On 24 April 1377, Leuven wrote to Joan to ask whether she thought it good that the town respond to an invitation from the land of Liège to attend a meeting to conclude an arrangement between Wenceslas and the bishop of Liège concerning their mutual disagreements.²⁷

The power of the great Brabançon towns was recognised abroad. At times, they were led to concern themselves with the internal politics of neighbouring principalities. In October 1362, Leuven and other Brabançon towns met *om der saken wille van den lande van Henegouwe doen her Robrecht van Namen hem dedinghe*, that is, concerning the conflict that opposed Albert of Bavaria, regent of

¹⁹ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 46–9.

²⁰ AVL, 1^{er} sect., reg. 9, f. 41 v.

²¹ Laurent, 'Les conventions', p. 141.

²² DD, III, p. 117; De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 278.

²³ AVL, 1^{er} sect., reg. 9, f. 43 v.

²⁴ Galesloot, 'Acte', pp. 21–8.

²⁵ Let us not forget that Louis of Male was also duke of Brabant, since the treaty of Ath (1357), and it was no doubt in this title that they contacted him (AVL, 4.995, f. 31 v.; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 188).

²⁶ AVL, 4.995, f. 31 v.

²⁷ AVL, 4.996, f. 214 v.

Hainault and Holland, and Robert of Namur.²⁸ In April 1382, Leuven, at the request of Ghent, met with the bishop and the towns of Liège to ask them to let the Gantois provision themselves in the land of Liège.²⁹ Similarly, Leuven asked Wenceslas to go with the towns of Brabant and the bishop and towns of Liège to meet the count of Flanders and ask him to make peace with Ghent.³⁰ In certain cases, we even see a member of the Estates conclude alliances with a foreign power. In 1398, the towns of Brabant, under the duchess' aegis, concluded a treaty of confederation with the towns of the principality of Liège and of the county of Looz, with military and economic clauses.³¹

The Estates and the opening of hostilities

The *Joyeuse Entrée* of Joan and Wenceslas forbade them to start a 'common war' without the agreement of the towns and country. The Estates discussed the case so as to know whether or not to provide military aid to the duke when he undertook an expedition that did not directly concern the duchy. This was the case, for example, in 1368 and in 1375, when Wenceslas hoped to receive their support for his expeditions against the *companies*.³² Later, Anthony was to ask them recurrently for troops to fight against the Armagnacs alongside his brother John the Fearless.³³ This was not a new situation. Already in 1306, when John II, duke of Brabant, declared that the count of Hainault owed him homage for South Holland and prepared himself for war, his subjects demonstrated to him that the treaty of 1280 had deprived him of all his rights over that region.³⁴ The Estates did not wish to see the duchy drawn into a conflict that evidently did not interest them at all. When the duke decided to undertake a private war, the Estates did not feel themselves concerned. In 1371, during the *chevauchée* of Jülich, Brabant had not furnished any military assistance to Wenceslas. Only the towns of Brussels and Leuven had consented, with some hesitation, to 'lend' the duke a small corps of archers.³⁵ The Estates knew officially nothing of the conflict until the official announcement of Wenceslas' capture. During the weeks that preceded the announcement in Brussels of the defeat of their prince, the Estates devoted themselves to quite other matters, economic and financial, thus indicating that the country was not at war. After the announcement, of the duke's capture, and on the duchess' initiative, the Estates involved themselves in the conflict for the first time.³⁶ Since the war had been a private one, Joan could expect little comfort. After the defeat at Baesweiler, the Estates refused to aid the duchess by attacking Jülich, even though this was intended to free their captive duke. In 1407, Anthony, wishing to resume the war against the duke of Guelders and

²⁸ AVL, 4.986 bis, f. 345 v.; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 114.

²⁹ AVL, 5.001, f. 64 v.

³⁰ AVL, 5.001, f. 66 r.–v., 69, 70.

³¹ BY, II, pp. 349–57; DD, III, pp. 132–5.

³² AVL, 4.992, f. 52; 4.999, f. 30; Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, p. 108.

³³ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, Annexe V, nos 831–3, 853–4, 857–8, etc.

³⁴ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, pp. 355–7.

³⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 22 v., 23, 24 v.

³⁶ Dubois, 'La bataille', p. 23; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 71; II, p. 781.

Jülich, convoked the Estates and asked for the service of the host. As he did not explain his intentions sufficiently clearly, the Estates refused to provide him support.³⁷ In these circumstances, it is unsurprising to find that Wenceslas had to account for himself before the Estates. In December 1378, he assembled the towns so as to explain to them how the war between Brabant and Liège had begun.³⁸ The Estates did not always have a negative attitude and the situation completely differed when it was a question of the security of the duchy. In 1369, the tension between Liège and Brabant was at its height and the Estates were much preoccupied with the threat of a new war.³⁹ Wenceslas assembled them to discuss the looming conflict. War was avoided, but the negotiations towards an accord would occupy the years 1369, 1370 and the beginning of 1371.⁴⁰ During the third war of Guelders, they acted in concert with the duchess to lead Brabant to victory. In 1397, the secular Estates were assembled by the duchess. They decided by common consent to renew the war against the duke of Guelders during the year 1398, and to carry out military operations in the land of Jülich.⁴¹ Later, in 1418, they voted the service of the host.⁴²

The Estates and the leaders of the army

In wartime, the Estates actively took part in the organisation of the defence of the duchy. For example, in March 1398, they met, in the presence of Joan and the duke of Burgundy, to find means to defend the country against the duke of Guelders.⁴³ During the second war of Guelders, they were sufficiently powerful to be able to choose the leaders of the Brabançon army. In 1385, William I, duke of Guelders, ordered several raids in the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch. So as to fight effectively against the invader, Joan assembled the Estates⁴⁴ in Brussels. Together, they decided to send John of Wittem, seneschal of Brabant, with a company of men-at-arms to 's Hertogenbosch to defend the *mairie* and launch a counter-attack against Guelders.⁴⁵ Later, before setting out to lay siege to Grave for the second time, they chose the general captains of the army.⁴⁶ We find that in this period the duchess was totally dependent on the Estates. Such a situation did not occur during the lifetime of Wenceslas. Later on, during the third war of Guelders, the captains of the army were chosen shortly before the army entered enemy territory. It seems that in this case the Estates were not able to participate in the election.

³⁷ BY, III, pp. 14–17; DD, III, pp. 167–8; Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 300–1.

³⁸ AVL, 4.996 bis, f. 47 v., 48.

³⁹ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 107, 240.

⁴⁰ AGR, CC, 2.356, 2.357; AVL, 4.993, f. 46 r.–v.; De Ram, 'Particularités', pp. 237, 240, etc.

⁴¹ DD, III, p. 132; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 210.

⁴² Collet, 'Manuscrit', p. 35.

⁴³ AVL, 1^{er} sect., reg. 9, f. 43; Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 45; Quicke, 'Itinéraire', p. 212.

⁴⁴ The *prelati, barones, nobiles, milites, vasalli, feudales et deputati oppidorum et francisiarum patrie Brabancie*.

⁴⁵ DD, III, pp. 108–9.

⁴⁶ DD, III, p. 123.

The Estates and financial aids

The exaction of aids was the principal prerogative of the Estates, who alone were empowered to fulfil the requests of the duke and to fix the total. This was not a novel situation. In an act of 29 April 1299, John II declared that the inhabitants of the villages of Kalmthout, Essen and Hamme, the domain of the abbey of Tongerlo, were to pay taxes only so long as the barons of Brabant granted the duke the right to impose on their vassals.⁴⁷ The motives judged sufficient for the duke to exact an aid without having to bargain with the Estates were not many. In 1362, the reserved cases or feudal aids were limited to ransom, marriage and dubbing.⁴⁸ For this reason, the dukes regularly had recourse to extraordinary aids to sustain their war efforts: in 1356 (the war of the succession of Brabant), 1362 (following from that war), in 1372–74 (the *chevauchée* of Jülich and its repayments) and in 1386, 1388 and 1390 (the second war of Guelders).⁴⁹ More than once the Estates were intransigent on this matter. In February 1373, the towns united to demand that the duke should redress their grievances, and only thereafter would they respond to his demand for aid.⁵⁰ After having given their agreement, they verified whether or not the duke made correct use of the aid. In 1374, a grave disagreement opposed Wenceslas to the Estates, as both wished to nominate the receivers of the aid. This meant having control over the assignment of quotas and the freedom to make use of the sums gathered.⁵¹ The Estates were also responsible for the exaction of an exceptional aid. In 1388, they decided to raise a tax (*glaviegeit*) intended to maintain, for three months, 1,200 *glaives* and 400 archers, to carry on the war against the duke of Guelders.⁵² Here as elsewhere, the Estates were not an easy partner. After the defeat at Nicopolis (1396), Philip the Bold appealed to his allies, as he had a pressing need for money to repay the ransoms of his son and the other Burgundian knights in Turkish hands. On 3 April 1397, Joan asked them to provide the duke of Burgundy with an aid *gracieuse* of 100,000 old *écus*. They refused this proposal but expressed their sympathy for the duke of Burgundy.⁵³ The strict control exercised by the Estates on the exaction and levying of extraordinary aids explains why this tax, at least until 1430, did not become first regular and then permanent as was the case in France in the same period.

⁴⁷ AGR, CC, 8, f. 443.

⁴⁸ BY, II, pp. 592–3.

⁴⁹ Van Uytven, 'Standenprivileges en -beden in Brabant'; Moureaux-Van Neck, 'Un aspect de l'histoire financière du Brabant au moyen âge'.

⁵⁰ AVL, 4.997, f. 50.

⁵¹ BY, II, pp. 227 et seq.; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 211–16; Van Der Straeten, *Het Charter*, I, pp. 238–48.

⁵² AVL, 5.002, f. 37 v., 45 v., 64; BR, Mss, 5.562, ff. 108–12 v.

⁵³ AGR, CC, 48.887, f. 7; CC, 2.437, f. 376 v.; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XVI, pp. 265–8.

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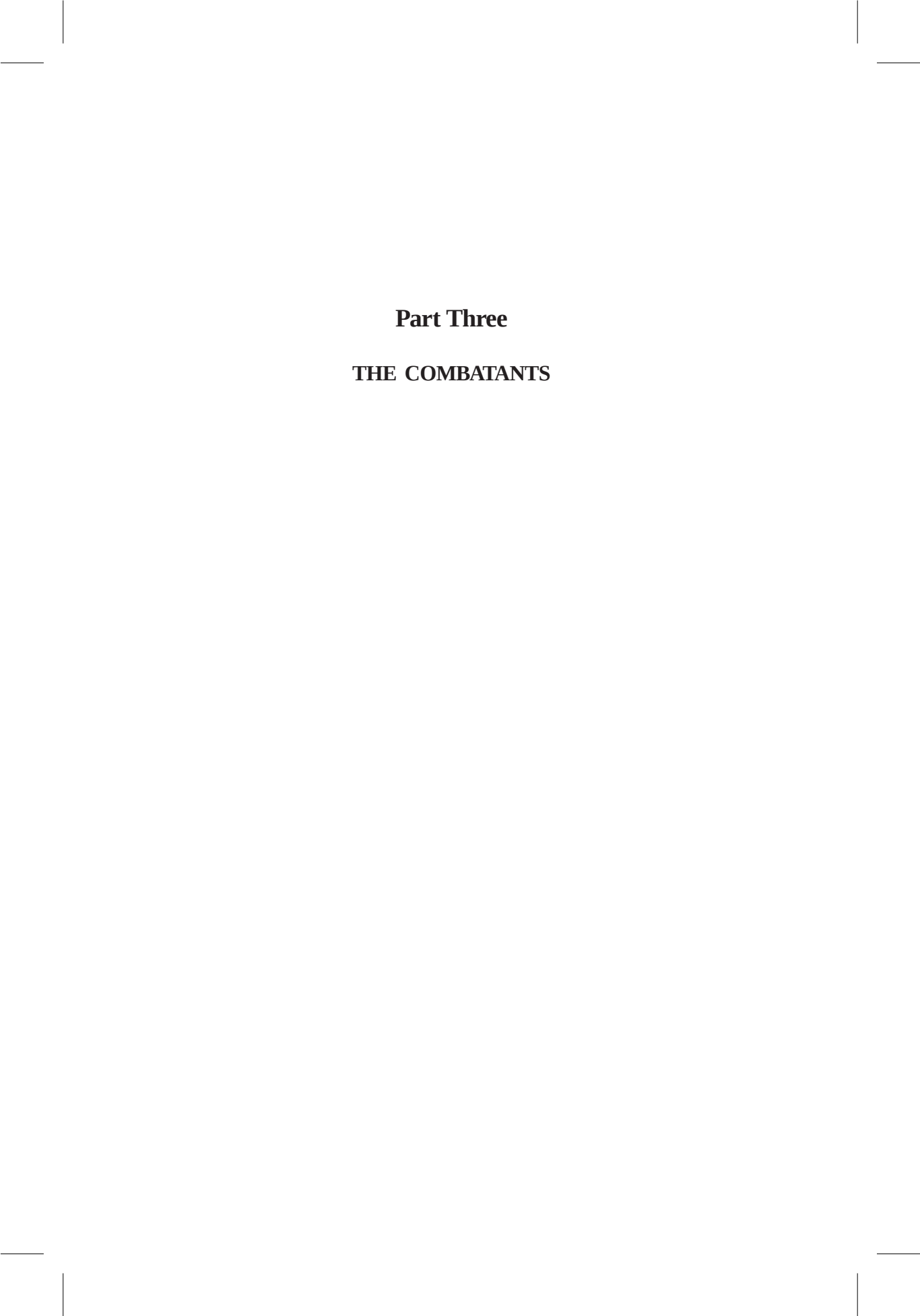
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Part Three

THE COMBATANTS

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8

Nobility and Chivalry in Brabant

Introduction

Medieval society is often described in terms of a threefold division; we have those that pray, those that fight and those that labour. The Estates were organised in a very similar fashion, as there we find the clergy, the nobility and the towns. At the risk of caricature, we can use this same division to describe military matters. Here we encounter professional combatants (the nobility and the knights), occasional combatants (the urban militias) and non-combatants (churchmen and others). In this part, I intend to review these different categories as well as certain unclassified characters such as mercenaries and specialists. It is but honourable to begin with the knight, the man-at-arms par excellence of the later Middle Ages. Unfortunately, the Brabançon nobility has not yet been made the object of any detailed study. We do have available some excellent works for the classical Middle Ages¹ or for the fifteenth century,² but there is almost nothing for the period that concerns us.³ Within the scope of this book, I cannot fill this void. We await specialised studies of the great Brabançon families and a synthesis on this subject; for now, I am content to present the latest ideas and to put forth my reflections on the nobility, chivalry and warfare in Brabant. However, I shall not study here their particular style of combat as this has already been the object of many excellent studies.

Definitions and peculiarities of the Brabançon nobility

In the eleventh century, the territories that would later form the duchy of Brabant were divided into a large number of domains of varying size, whose history was intimately linked to the development of feudalism. The status of their rulers, be they *nobiles*, *milites* or *liberi*, was the result of the local tribulations of each seignior and their relations to neighbouring lords, the church, and the

¹ Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse en Brabant au XII^e et XIII^e siècles'; Verriest, *Questions d'histoire des institutions médiévales*; Verbesselt, 'De oudste Brabantse adel en feodaliteit'.

² De Win, 'De adel in het hertogdom Brabant van de vijftiende eeuw'; De Win, 'Adel en stadspatriciaat in het hertogdom Brabant in de 15^{de} eeuw'; De Win, 'The Lesser Nobility of the Burgundian Netherlands'.

³ Poncelet, 'Une paix de lignage au duché de Brabant'; Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 55–69; Van Uytven, 'De Brabantse adel als politieke en sociale groep'.

prince. In the twelfth century, a hierarchy of these individuals was gradually established. The most powerful families distinguished themselves and they would be recognised as *dominus* in the following century. The rank of these lords within the Brabançon nobility was always closely related to the extent of their domains and their standing at the ducal court.⁴ While it is relatively easy to trace the broad outlines of the development of this social group, it is much harder to define the conditions for admission to their ranks. Broadly speaking, historians speak of transmission by blood, possession of seigniories and allods, dubbing as a knight, and the enjoyment of *libertas*. These conditions varied, however, from region to region. In Flanders and Liège, noble descent and transmission by blood were most important.⁵ The same went for the regions of Gembloux and Hainault, at least during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁶ At Namur, it was the enjoyment of *libertas*,⁷ and, in Brabant, the possession of a seignior, the *dominium*, that counted the most.⁸ These criteria themselves changed with the passage of time and altered according to the manners of the period. In Brabant, the *dominium* was critical for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but by the fourteenth, not so. By this time, knighthood was the determining factor.⁹ In the fifteenth century, birth seems to have become all-important.¹⁰ Hence, the idea of Perroy – according to which, in medieval society, in the absence of a civil State, to be noble was above all to be regarded as such – is very relevant.¹¹ Many sources from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries confirm this point of view, for both nobility and knighthood. The nobleman ought to live nobly; that is, he should live on his own wealth, from the rewards of high office in the service of the ruler, or from the spoils of war. As with the knight, he had also to accomplish certain deeds, as there could be no worth in the absence of feats of arms.

Relations between nobility and chivalry in Brabant

The relationship between nobility and knighthood has been the object of many debates. Verriest was one of the first to defend the idea that nobility and knighthood were quite distinct from each other at the outset.¹² This was the case in Brabant. Among the noble families mentioned from the first half of the twelfth century, it is extremely rare to encounter any knights. Inversely, among the numerous *milites* of the twelfth century, not one entered the nobility before the thirteenth century. At this time, the knights had not yet formed a social class, and

⁴ Verbesselt, 'De oudste', p. 33.

⁵ Poncelet, 'De la condition des personnes dans la société du moyen âge'.

⁶ Genicot, 'La noblesse' au XI^e siècle dans la région de Gembloux'; Dereck, 'La noblesse dans le comté de Hainaut du XI^e au XIII^e siècle'.

⁷ Genicot, *L'économie*, I, pp. 4–60.

⁸ Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse', pp. 58–61.

⁹ Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 55–69.

¹⁰ De Win, 'De adel', pp. 403 et seq.

¹¹ Perroy, 'La noblesse', p. 58; Dravasa, 'Vivre noblement'.

¹² Verriest, *Questions*, pp. 53–64.

cavalry warfare was still no more than a specialised occupation.¹³ The situation would change with the appearance of the military orders in the duchy. An increasing number of nobles were dubbed shortly after the Templars and Hospitallers established themselves in Brabant during the second half of the twelfth century.¹⁴ From this point on, the gates of the nobility were open to knights. In the thirteenth century, it is frequent to see individuals appear first as *milites* and then as *nobiles*. In the documents of the second half of the fourteenth century, there can be no further doubt. Nobility and chivalry were mingled. In the alliance of knights of 1355¹⁵ and the list of Brabançon lords convoked by Louis of Male in 1357,¹⁶ nobles and knights are mixed and it is impossible clearly to differentiate them. Similarly, we find them grouped without distinction as representative of the nobility in the Estates.¹⁷ An act of 1404 is very clear on this point, as here we find mentioned the *baenrotsen, ridderen ende andere edele* making up a single group.¹⁸ This is not to say that all knights were members of the nobility or that all nobles had to be dubbed knights, but van Uytven holds that at the start of the fourteenth century, owing to the influence of French society, all the nobles were knights and that those who did not have this dignity were treated as nobles of a lower rank.¹⁹

During the fifteenth century, the situation changed. The number of knights diminished remarkably. It seems that the minor nobility of Brabant had difficulty in supporting the costly and almost continuous military expeditions undertaken during the successive reigns of John III, Wenceslas, Joan and Anthony. Dubbing, the status of knight and the attendant obligations became too costly for the majority of lesser lords. Naturally, the equipment required by a knight was more complete and highly developed, the horses that he used in battle were of a higher quality, and his followers were more numerous, than those of other men-at-arms. Similarly, if he were captured, his ransom was higher. Fortunately, the knight also benefited from advantages such as higher pay, reimbursement for horses lost on campaign, and the expenses of captivity. Nonetheless, there was no certainty that his budget would be balanced at the end of a conflict, especially if he were on the losing side. Gradually, the high nobility lost interest in chivalry, as its members no longer enjoyed any benefit from this additional distinction. This is a general trend that affected all the regions and not only Brabant. In France, between 1300 and 1500, the proportion of the nobility that were dubbed knights declined from 33 per cent to less than 5 per cent²⁰ and in England with more than 1,500 knights around 1300, there remained less than 1,000 by 1400.²¹ Closer to Brabant, in the county of Namur of 1400, Genicot

¹³ Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse', pp. 36 et seq.

¹⁴ De Moreau, *Histoire*, III, pp. 474–9.

¹⁵ BY, II, p. 475.

¹⁶ BY, II, pp. 506–10; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 216–19.

¹⁷ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 438–42.

¹⁸ Van Uytven, 'De Brabantse', pp. 75–6.

¹⁹ Van Uytven, 'De Brabantse', p. 75.

²⁰ Contamine, 'The French', p. 140; Contamine, 'Points', pp. 259 et seq.

²¹ Ayton, 'English', pp. 29–30; Prestwich, '“Miles in Armis Strenuus”: the Knight at War'.

shows that only nine of twenty-five noble families from the end of the thirteenth century were still extant and only three of them still had knights within their ranks.²² This should not be too hastily interpreted as a decline of knighthood or of the ideals of chivalry. The fifteenth century was a period of transition and of adaptation rather than of decadence.

As dubbing started to become a costly ceremony or a superfluous luxury, dubbing on campaign, before or after a battle, was a means to acquire the dignity at a lesser cost. This abridged ceremonies intended to boost the morale of the combatants or to reward them after victory. Many were those that were dubbed just before the battles of Worringen,²³ Vottem²⁴ and Tourinnes.²⁵ I should make it clear that, contrary to a common claim among historians, this form of dubbing was not second-class. In 1332, so great a figure as John III was dubbed in this manner at the frontier of the duchy on the eve of a battle.²⁶ Flori proposes that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, 'on adoubait souvent la veille d'une bataille pour disposer de plus nombreux guerriers à cheval'.²⁷ This seems to me to be too simplistic an argument and quite impossible to achieve in practice. The new knights would not have either the time or the material to re-equip themselves so rapidly after their new promotion. Nor need I mention the foolishness of a ruler who would refuse to allow his cavalrymen to fight on horseback simply because they were not members of the knighthood. These spur-of-the-moment dubbings should instead be regarded as a means to motivate the combatants and to increase their morale before the battle.

The position of the nobility and chivalry in Brabant

The number of noble families, and the proportion they represent of the total population of the duchy, are difficult to estimate. Between 1100 and 1300, about eighty noble families have been identified in the duchy.²⁸ This number does not include the families of the region of Gembloux.²⁹ At the end of the thirteenth century, we find mention of only about forty such families. The charter of Cortenberg mentions 56 nobles from 45 different families.³⁰ This number would grow. The alliance of knights (1355) concerned 139 individuals.³¹ As, at this time, nobility and chivalry were closely linked, we may consider without excessive error that the greater part of these were also members of the nobility. The list of Brabançon lords convoked by Louis of Male in 1357 includes a total of

²² Genicot, *L'économie*, II, pp. 181–249.

²³ VH, pp. 176, 312.

²⁴ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, II, pp. 732–3.

²⁵ Wauters, 'Henri de Brabant', col. 173–4.

²⁶ DD, II, p. 560; BY, I, pp. 502–4.

²⁷ Flori, *La chevalerie*, p. 31.

²⁸ Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse', p. 34.

²⁹ Genicot, 'La "noblesse" au XI^e siècle dans la région de Gembloux'.

³⁰ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 12–19.

³¹ BY, II, p. 475.

162 people.³² If not all of these were nobles, given the context surrounding the production of this document, it is probable that most if not all of the noble families of the duchy were represented there. The list of nobles of 1415 mentions 124 people, of whom 85 were Brabançons and 39 came from the duchy of Limburg or the lands of Outre-Meuse.³³ For the fifteenth century, de Win estimates the number of noble families in Brabant at around hundred.³⁴

During the fourteenth century, we thus find just over hundred nobles representing about sixty families. What does this represent relative to the size of the duchy? It is difficult to estimate the population of Brabant before the fifteenth century. However, thanks to the documents concerning the raising of the extraordinary aid of 1374, we know that the taxable population of the *mairie* of Leuven, that is, excluding paupers, servants and children, stood at 136,098 adults.³⁵ By careful calculation, Cuvelier proposes a total population of 350,000 inhabitants divided into 80,000 households.³⁶ The noble families thus represent 0.075 per cent of the total population of the duchy.

The chivalric hierarchy

The barons

Although the links between nobility and chivalry were close, we must not confuse the chivalric hierarchy with that of the nobility. In Brabant, in the fourteenth century, the three successive degrees of the chivalric hierarchy were barons, knights and squires. The peers, vassals to a higher echelon but equals before an eminent lord, did not exist in Brabant. Similarly, the sergeant (*serviens*) was absent from this hierarchy, whereas in England he was placed between the knight and the squire.³⁷

The origins of the word 'baron' (*barones*, *barons*, *baroenen*) are poorly known. Aside from various definitions that do not concern us here, baron serves to designate the direct vassals of the sovereign, or only the most important among them.³⁸ At times, it has the meaning of peer.³⁹ The baron must be distinguished from the banneret. However, in Brabant, the two terms have often been confused. Certain individuals, called *barones* in Latin and *barons* in French, are described as *baenrotsen* in Flemish.⁴⁰ But, *baenrots* is the usual translation for banneret and not for baron.⁴¹ The confusion is, however, not absolute. There exists at least one case in which a clear distinction is made between the two terms. In the charter of

³² BY, II, p. 506–10.

³³ *Den luyster*, II, pp. 17–19; De Win, 'De adel', p. 395.

³⁴ De Win, 'De adel', pp. 394–5.

³⁵ Cuvelier, *Les dénombrements*, pp. 1–16.

³⁶ Cuvelier, *Les dénombrements*, pp. LXXXII–XCV; Pounds, 'Population and settlement in the Low Countries'.

³⁷ Prestwich, *Armies*, p. 17.

³⁸ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 438–9.

³⁹ Bloch, *La société*, pp. 80–1, 85–6; Bonenfant and Despy, 'La noblesse', p. 49.

⁴⁰ Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, p. 210.

⁴¹ Verwijns and Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch*, I, col. 514–15.

Cortenbergh (1312), the duke demands that *alle onsen baronen van onsen lande, ridderen beide banerache ende andren* should add their seals to the document.⁴² This phrase also appears in the confirmation of 1372. The passage is slightly modified in the following manner: *allen onsen baroenen, ridderen, beide banrotsen ende ridderen*.⁴³ In these two charters, the barons are clearly distinguished from the other knights (bannerets and simple knights).

Was this distinction purely honorific? It seems not. On 9 August 1385, the duchess promised to refund, before the following Christmas, a large sum of money to one of her counsellors, John (II), lord of Gronsveld. In case of non-reimbursement, certain hostages, pledged by the duchess, would have to be provided. It was specified that each baron would be accompanied by a man-at-arms and three horses, while the knights and squires were followed by a man-at-arms and only two horses.⁴⁴ Later, at the start of the fifteenth century, the barons who were part of the council of regency during the minority of John IV received higher rewards than the other nobles who were only knights.⁴⁵ The barons were clearly placed above the other members of the nobility.

What were the criteria for a noble to be considered a baron? According to Gaillard, this quality was attached to a dozen particular seigniories in the duchy. The lords of Gaasbeek, Wezemaal, Rotselaar, La Leck and Breda, Diest, Bouchout, Bergen-op-Zoom, Duffel and Wittem partook of this high honour.⁴⁶ I must however reject this opinion. In the accounts of the *recette générale* for the year 1374–75, it is stated that the lord of Gaasbeek was not yet a baron (*non est adhuc baro*) at this time. The same is true of the lord of Bergen-op-Zoom.⁴⁷ This dignity therefore did not follow simply from the acquisition of a domain. More recently, van Uytven holds that, around 1340, the lords of Cuyk and Rotselaar; in 1372, the lords of Aarschot, Rumst, Diest, Wezemaal, Petersheim and Bergen-op-Zoom; and in 1383, William of Sayn, lord of Rhode-Sainte-Agathe, Engelbert of Nassau, John, lord of Wezemaal, the lords Diest, Bergen-op-Zoom and Liedekerke, were all barons.⁴⁸ This author unfortunately does not disclose the sources he used to arrive at this conclusion. At the end of the fourteenth century, the title was thus not hereditary and neither was it attached to the possession of a particular domain. It constituted a personal distinction that was acquired in a way that unfortunately still remains unknown to us.

The knights banneret

It is more than likely that certain knights, more fortunate than others or enjoying higher prestige, would have benefited from a status equivalent to the French *chevaliers bannerets*.⁴⁹ The banneret was a knight of a rank superior to the simple

⁴² Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, p. 15.

⁴³ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, pp. 37, 39.

⁴⁴ AGR, CB, Vienne, boîte III, 111.

⁴⁵ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 351.

⁴⁶ Gaillard, *Le conseil*, I, p. 24.

⁴⁷ AGR, CC, 2.361, ff. 81–2.

⁴⁸ Van Uytven, 'De Brabantse', p. 76.

⁴⁹ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 14.

knight or squire, whose distinction was to be able to lead into battle, under his banner, a larger number of men-at-arms. The etymology of the word *baenrots* or *baanrots* in modern Flemish would be as follows: *baan-* must be associated to *bannus* and *ban*, that is, the mobilisation of troops. *-Rots* signifies *rote* or *route*. This lets us conclude that the *baanrots* were the leaders of certain military units.⁵⁰ This definition, at least for the military aspect of the title, is confirmed by a passage from the *Brabantsche Yeesten*.⁵¹ The *baenrotsen* were the heads of the most important families in the land. While their numbers were restricted, it was their support rather than that of the mass of minor vassals that gave strength to the prince. In what circumstances did a knight become a banneret? No doubt on the occasion of a ceremony of *levée de bannière*, in the course of which a noble, already a knight received the right to possess a personal square banner. This is what happened for Renaud (I) of Schönau, lord of Schoonvorst, who, having been still a simple squire at the start of the year 1346, became knight and banneret (*levat banire, baro factus*) on the same day on the occasion of the battle of Vottem.⁵²

Two texts, unfortunately too laconic, suggest the existence of temporary bannerets for the duration of a tournament. The first concerns the participation of John, bastard of Luxemburg, at a tournament of 1378.⁵³ The same would also receive cloth for another tournament banner in 1380–81.⁵⁴ The second document concerns the participation of John Blondel at a tournament taking place in 1408.⁵⁵ Neither John, bastard of Luxemburg, nor John Blondel were known on other occasions as barons or bannerets. It seems therefore that they enjoyed only temporary possession of the title of banneret.

The knights

It is in this category that we find the greater part of the Brabançon chivalry. In the sources, they are mentioned simply as *miles* or *ridder*. In France, they were known as *chevaliers simples*, *chevaliers bacheliers*, *chevaliers sans bannières* or *chevaliers d'un écu*.⁵⁶ These must however be divided into two categories: the knights companion and the knights bachelor. This emerges from an ordinance from the ducal household of Anthony (18 March 1407). The number of people making up the suite of each such is precisely stated here: a banneret (*baneret*) could be accompanied by six men and seven horses (the seventh being his own); a knight companion (*chevalier à compaignon*) by four men and five horses; a knight bachelor (*chevalier bachelor*) by three men and four horses; and a squire (*escuier*) only by two men and three horses.⁵⁷ However, we should not forget that this document concerns the household of a prince influenced by the customs and habits

⁵⁰ Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, p. 209; Brokken, 'De creatie van baanderheren door de graven Willem IV en Willem V'.

⁵¹ BY, I, p. 441.

⁵² De Chestret de Haneffe, *Renard de Schönau*, pp. 17–20; Lavigne, *Kroniek*, II, p. 178.

⁵³ AGR, CC, 2.363, f. 78.

⁵⁴ AGR, CC, 2.366, f. 119.

⁵⁵ AGR, CC, 2.394, f. 190 r.

⁵⁶ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 14–15.

⁵⁷ Kauch, 'L'organisation', p. 192.

of the French. It is quite possible that this division was not in place during the time of Joan and Wenceslas. This may be confirmed by Jan van Boendale who uses the terms bachelor (*bachelere*, *baetseleer*) and knight (*ridder*) interchangeably in his chronicle.⁵⁸

The squires

The Brabançon sources very frequently use the phrase *ridderen ende knechten*⁵⁹ and sometimes the variant *ridderen ende cnapen*.⁶⁰ The Latin equivalent of this expression is *cum militibus et armigeris suis*.⁶¹ While the term *ridder* undoubtedly signifies the knights, *knecht* or *cnapen* can have several different senses in the military sphere.⁶² The *knecht* could be any horseman at all, even a noble, who had not yet been dubbed.⁶³ In this case, it signifies a man-at-arms in his own right and was the equivalent to the squire in France. In a more general sense, *knecht* could also be used to mean any man bearing arms. In this sense, it is often used as the counting unit to describe the police expeditions of the *hauts justiciers*. Only in this case could it describe a foot soldier as well as a horseman.⁶⁴

Cnape is a less frequent term in Brabançon documents. In the fourteenth century, we find it in certain lists of witnesses, to distinguish those squires or nobles not dubbed as knights.⁶⁵ In Brabant, it is clear that this general use was very close to that of *knecht*. Its second sense comes to us from the *keure* of the *ammanie* of Brussels (1292) where the duke fixed the number of *cnapen tors* (on horse) and *te voet* (on foot) that each *haut justicier* could keep permanently at his orders.⁶⁶ The French version of the text uses the word *valet* (*varles*).⁶⁷ Similarly, in the *Rymkronyk*, Jan van Heelu identified sergeants (*seriant*) with *knapen*.⁶⁸ However, it is possible that in this case the author confused two different concepts: the sergeant, a particular type of combatant (medium-heavy cavalryman) and the squire, a rank in the chivalric hierarchy. In the field, nothing would prevent a squire from fighting heavily armed. The terms *knecht* and *cnapen* must not be taken in the sense of servant. They were not used in their general sense except in accounts, to state the size of a troop. Hence, it clearly refers to men-at-arms, heavy cavalry not dubbed as knights.

The valets of men-at-arms

In the quittances, *knecht* could have another meaning. It signifies the valet or servant of a man-at-arms, the second member of the *glaive*, not a combatant. This is

⁵⁸ BY, I, pp. 520–1, 523.

⁵⁹ AVL, 6.486, f. 33, 68 or 77 v.; AGR, CB, 4.683, 4.692–4.707, etc.

⁶⁰ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, II, p. 155.

⁶¹ AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 66.

⁶² Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 115 et seq.

⁶³ The term *edelknecht* attests to this origin (AGR, CB, 3.035).

⁶⁴ Kerremans, *Etude*, p. 233.

⁶⁵ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, pp. 40, 41; Van Winter, 'Knighthood', p. 89.

⁶⁶ VH, p. 547.

⁶⁷ VH, p. 553.

⁶⁸ VH, pp. 316–17.

confirmed by the use of the term *stalknecht*.⁶⁹ These attendants had the task of dealing with the provisioning and support of their master and his horses. During the battle, they did not fight, but bound and guarded their lord's prisoners, found him a fresh mount when needed and sometimes helped him in grave distress.⁷⁰ These valets appear only rarely in the documents. We count only twenty of them in the expedition of Jülich.⁷¹ This does not mean at all that they were only present in such small numbers, but simply that few of them were captured or indemnified. In reality, they were as numerous as the men-at-arms whom they accompanied, that is the number of *glaives* or *lances*.

The place of the nobles and knights in the Brabançon armies

For once, the sources are relatively numerous and it is possible to make a detailed study of the fighting nobility and chivalry of the duchy from the end of the thirteenth to the end of the fourteenth century. In fact, thanks to the chronicle of Jan van Heelu on the war of the succession of Limburg and principally on the battle of Worringen,⁷² the indentures from the years 1338-1339 when John III raised a large army to help the king of England,⁷³ and finally thanks to the quittances and the *scadeboek* of the war of the succession of Brabant and of the *chevauchée* of Jülich, we can form a good idea of the composition of the ducal armies and their evolution. Such an enquiry would be richly informative, but this would be too lengthy a task to be undertaken within the scope of this book, since some thousands of individuals, not only from Brabant but also from Flanders, Liège, Namur, Hainault, Limburg, Luxembourg, Guelders, France, etc., would have to be identified. A cursory reading of the archives tells us that from the end of the thirteenth century to the start of the fifteenth, the armies were principally composed of heavily armed mounted men. They formed the core of the army, and the urban militias, whether they served as infantry or as archers, were only secondary troops. It was not uncommon to see the duke at the head of an army formed entirely of horsemen, as was the case at Baesweiler or during the expedition against the duke of Guelders and Jülich in 1407. What is more, we should emphasise that during the war of the succession of Limburg, the *chevaliers, escuiers et gens estrains de lignages de chevaliers* were exempt from the extraordinary aid levied for the occasion, no doubt because they formed the duke's armed forces. The other inhabitants of the duchy, by contrast, had to hand over 1/20th of their moveables.⁷⁴ The Brabançon nobility therefore still possessed, in the fourteenth century and at the start of the fifteenth, an appreciable power, derived from their landed property and the prestige of their representatives. These factors guaranteed them a certain independence from the duke, to whom they were an indispensable military support in

⁶⁹ AGR, CB, 3.182. The term *stall* signifying stable.

⁷⁰ Contamine, *La guerre*, pp. 161–2.

⁷¹ AGR, CB, 3.102, 3.182, 3.277, 3.425, 3.820, etc.

⁷² Lehnart, *Die Schlacht von Worringen*.

⁷³ Wauters, 'La formation d'une armée brabançonne'.

⁷⁴ VH, pp. LI–LII.

case of war.⁷⁵ By contrast, the duke never called exclusively upon the urban militias for his expeditions. The punitive expedition carried out by the town of Brussels against the castle of Gaasbeek is not an exception to this rule. It was a private expedition, and the absence of the Brabançon nobility is easily explained. They did not wish to support the commons in an enterprise directed against one of their own.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, p. 498.

⁷⁶ While certain chroniclers show the participation of the whole duchy in ducal expeditions, and not only the duke and his vassals, it has been shown that these authors deliberately altered the facts for various political and nationalistic reasons (Van Gerven, 'Nationaal gevoel'; Van Gerven, 'Sociale werkelijkheid'; Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 51–4).

9

The Urban Militias

Introduction

In the second half of the fourteenth century, the towns of Brabant were numerous, and a large part of the population of the duchy lived in them. Before 1300, van Uytven counts 21 localities that could be considered as towns,¹ without taking account of the numerous places possessing a charter of liberty.² Shortly before the death of John III, in 1355, so as to ease the succession of Joan, the towns took the initiative in forming an alliance. In it, we find 44 towns and franchises of the duchies of Brabant and Limburg as well as the lands of Outre-Meuse.³ The union of the towns, of 18 February 1372, also included 44 towns and franchises, all of them in Brabant.⁴ At this time, they all possessed an autonomous military organisation, charged with guarding the fortifications and with defending the town's privileges, territory and inhabitants.

For the duke, they represented enormous potentials that he did not overlook. To him, the towns meant fortifications, men and money. They also played a role of the first importance in the defence of the duchy. They were much more stubborn obstacles than the isolated castles since they possessed sufficiently large material and human resources to mount a prolonged resistance. While a fortress was a costly and unproductive structure, a town, even one founded for military ends, played the same role while also being a source of revenue. To this end, the princes of the House of Leuven would include them in the ancient feudal structures and treat them, from the end of the twelfth century, as collective vassals.⁵ However, just like the other vassals, the towns attempted to restrict the size of their contingents, to limit their obligations in space and time and to replace their own service by a financial contribution. There exists as yet no general study of the communal armies of Brabant.⁶ There are of course some studies in local

¹ There are five large towns: Brussels, Leuven, Malines, Tirlemont, 's Hertogenbosch; five medium towns: Antwerp, Diest, Nivelles, Léau, Aerschot; and eleven small towns: Herenthals, Lierre, Breda, Vilvorde, Over-Yssche, Jodoigne, Gembloux, Wavre, Genappe, Hannut and Bergen-op-Zoom (Van Uytven, 'Les bourgeois', p. 469; Van Uytven, 'Brabantse en Antwerpse centrale plaatsen').

² Steurs, 'Les franchises du duché de Brabant au moyen âge'.

³ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 124–5; BY, II, pp. 473–4.

⁴ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 144–6.

⁵ Lousse, 'Les Etats de Brabant', p. 30; Poulet, *Histoire politique*, II, p. 171 et seq.

⁶ Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, pp. 272–9; Wyffels, *De oorsprong*, pp. 105–21; Zylbergelg, 'L'initiative', pp. 362–71; Henrard, 'L'artillerie', pp. 134–55.

history, but these are all relatively dated.⁷ As it is impossible to winnow all the urban archives of the duchy and to place the information thus harvested in the general context of the history of Brabant, I restrict myself here to the cases of a few large towns, and principally to that of Brussels, where the sources have almost all been published.

The rural militias will not be considered in this work. In any case, their role is unimportant, being often limited to the defence of their village or of a small local stronghold. Also, the archives are too discreet on the subject for us to be able to gain a precise idea of the impact of these rural militias on the progress of military operations.

Military obligations of the towns

The defence of the duchy and the rights of the duke

When the integrity of the duchy was threatened, the duke had recourse to a general levy. The townspeople were then mobilisable along with the rest of the population.⁸ The ruler took particular care to make sure of the participation of the towns. On 26 September 1386, it was the duchess and not one of her officers who sent the order for mobilisation to the towns of the *Roman Pays de Brabant*.⁹ Evidently, the prince wished also to use the military potential of the towns for his own interests, or at least in less grave situations. They were ready to aid their prince, but not at too great a cost nor without compensation. Hence, the military obligations to be provided for the prince were rapidly defined in charters of liberties. In 1192, Henry I promised the townspeople of Vilvorde that he would no longer require them to follow him in his expeditions beyond the Meuse, Antwerp, the Dendre and Nivelles.¹⁰ Thus, the duke himself set geographical limits to his military needs. He recognised implicitly the ability to choose whether or not to follow him in his wars carried on beyond these frontiers. This prefigures the articles of the charter obtained by Léau in 1213. The people of that town were freed from all military duties except if the duchy were invaded. In that case, along with the people of other towns, those of Léau were bound to the defence of Brabant.¹¹ This time, the duke limited the obligations to defensive warfare and the defence of the territory. It is on this principle that later documents would be set out. For example, in 1226, the townspeople of Duisburg were given a dispensation from all military expeditions unless the country was invaded.¹² Certain places received only a temporary privilege. In 1229, the people of Courrière were exempted from the expedition against the count of

⁷ Laenen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 226–39; Vander Linden, *Histoire*, pp. 130–3; Des Marez, *L'organisation*, pp. 386–407.

⁸ BY, I, p. 792.

⁹ AGR, CC, 2.372, f. 117.

¹⁰ Martens, 'Recueil', pp. 353–5.

¹¹ Martens, 'Recueil', pp. 368–9.

¹² Wauters, *De l'origine*, pp. 99–100.

Hainault or from accompanying the duke to a tournament.¹³ We know nothing of their obligations during future ducal campaigns. In exchange for an annual tax, the duke sometimes agreed to free the townspeople from all exactions and services. It was the case for Racourt on 6 December 1233.¹⁴ In wartime, this tax would allow the duke to pay for professional men-at-arms, soldiers of much higher quality than the common militias. Although the charters of liberty for the major towns such as Brussels, Leuven or Antwerp do not mention it, this obligatory participation in a defensive war must surely have applied to all of the Brabançon towns. This silence should be attributed to the pointlessness of stating a right that was not the subject of any dispute between the duke and the oldest towns at the time the charters were written. It would be astonishing to see such small localities as Vilvorde or Léau enjoy such great privileges while the most powerful cities of the duchy were deprived of them. In any case, in Henry III's testament (1261), the duke agreed to demand the services of the towns, without distinction, only for the defence of *terra nostra*.¹⁵ On the other hand, when the duke granted some new privileges to one of his towns, he often took care to remind them of their obligation to military service during a 'common war'. This was the case for Basse-Wavre, Grez and Ferrière (1226),¹⁶ Duisburg (8 October 1226),¹⁷ Gentinnes (1228),¹⁸ 's Hertogenbosch (11 January 1330)¹⁹ or Nivelles (26 March 1390).²⁰

Letters of non-prejudice

On their side, the town felt themselves intimately linked to the fate of the duchy. It was quite natural that they should take part in its defence. They regularly confirmed their willingness to protect Brabant from outside aggression.²¹ In the inter-urban alliances of 1261–62, the representatives of the towns undertook to inform their duke immediately if anything threatened the integrity of the territory or the rights of their lord, so that a remedy could be found for this state of affairs. To this end, the towns were ready to assist the prince militarily if need be.²² On 28 July 1313, several large towns of the duchy sealed reciprocal alliances (Leuven, Brussels, Antwerp, 's Hertogenbosch, Léau, Maastricht and Tirlemont). One of the articles of the treaty strongly resembles that of the union of 1261–62. If anyone threatened the frontiers of the land or the rights of the duke, the towns would come to his aid with all their strength.²³ This development is perfectly recapitulated in the oaths sworn during the *Joyeuse Entrée* of a

¹³ Wauters, *De l'origine*, pp. 110–12.

¹⁴ Wauters, *De l'origine*, pp. 125–6.

¹⁵ Boland, 'Le testament d'Henri III', pp. 93–6; Martens, 'A propos', p. 292.

¹⁶ De Marneffe, *Cartulaire*, III, pp. 444–6.

¹⁷ Wauters, *De l'origine*, pp. 99–100.

¹⁸ Wauters, *De l'origine*, pp. 109–10.

¹⁹ BY, I, pp. 781–6.

²⁰ Buisseret and De Puelle De La Nieppe, 'Cartulaire', pp. 40–1.

²¹ Boland, 'Un siècle d'alliances interurbaines en Brabant'.

²² Favresse, 'Actes', pp. 423–31; Boland, 'Les deux versions du pacte d'alliance des villes brabançonnes'.

²³ AVL, 237–242; Boland, 'Un siècle', p. 624.

new sovereign. In effect, the duke promised the townspeople that he would maintain their 'rights, privileges, charters, customs, usages and traditions as a good and loyal lord is obliged to do'.²⁴ Then, he received the oath of the townspeople, who swore obedience and fidelity and promised their help in conserving his rights and defending the territory.²⁵

The towns did not always remain aloof from ducal expeditions of an aggressive or private character. The preceding charters simply permitted them to choose freely whether to take part. As a result, when a town decided to accompany the duke in an offensive military operation, they did not forget to obtain a letter of non-prejudice. The document guaranteed that this breaking of their privileges did not constitute a precedent that the duke could subsequently invoke. In 1284, John I granted such letter to the *noble homme, chevalier, bourgeois, et tout nostre homme de nostre terre de Brabant* who had served him at their own expense during the war of the succession of Limburg.²⁶ When John II subdued the insurgent town of Malines in 1303, he recognised that the service done by the people of Brussels in this war had been by choice and not by right.²⁷ Gradually, the towns ceased to judge it necessary to obtain such letters and, after the expeditions against the king of France in 1340, the duke did not issue any new documents. The increasingly important political role played by the towns, notably at the heart of the Estates, probably accounts for this. They had become sufficiently powerful to oppose any abuse on the part of the duke. Later, during the *chevauchée* of Jülich, only the towns of Brussels and Leuven took part in the expedition. They 'lent' the duke some archers, by grace and not by right:

Item, John die Vosgeseint to Maastricht with letters to my lord to seal a letter about the archers lent to my lord were provided by favour and not by right.²⁸

This situation brings clearly to light the balance that was established between the wishes of the duke and the goodwill of the towns. Of course, they hoped to gain more advantages than a simple letter of non-prejudice when they agreed to help him in a war that was not their own. For this reason, the duke rewarded those towns whose help had been most useful to him. For example, on 15 September 1303, John II rewarded the people of Leuven for their aid, notably in the expedition against Hainault, by confirming the rights and privileges that had been granted to the town by his predecessors.²⁹ When John III attacked the lord of Fauquemont (1318), the militias of Leuven, Antwerp and Malines played a leading role in taking the fortress of Sittard.³⁰ The importance of this site for the

²⁴ Wauters, 'Les serments . . . inauguration', pp. 82–98.

²⁵ AVL, *Groot Gemeynboeck*, f. 1 r., 43.

²⁶ VH, pp. L–LI.

²⁷ De Ridder, 'De oorkonden verleend door hertog Jan II'; *Den luyster*, I, pp. 61–2; BY, I, pp. 713–14.

²⁸ 'Item Jan die Vosgeseint te Triche met brieven van geloven aen minen here omme den brief te besegelen vanden scutters dat men minen here die scutters leende van gracen ende van ghenen rechte XIX in oexst' (AVL, 4.995, f. 24 v.).

²⁹ BY, I, p. 712.

³⁰ BY, I, pp. 452, 454–6; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, IV/1, pp. 30–2.

security of trade between the Meuse and the Rhine easily explains the particular attention the towns gave to its capture.³¹ During the siege of Tournai (1340), the English publicly accused the men of Brussels and Leuven of treason. They had allowed several supply convoys to enter the besieged town. This is quite probable, but the militias of Brabant were not the only guilty party in this affair. Jacques van Artevelde suspected John III himself of pro-French sentiments. This is far from false.³² The duke acted thus so as to guarantee his sovereignty over the important seignior of Malines, while the curious attitude of the urban militias is accounted for by simple economic reasons. During the first three months of 1340, the trade in English wool was transferred by Edward III from Antwerp to Bruges. This transfer had major repercussions on the textile industry of Brabant. The patricians were thus divided as to the attitude to adopt towards the king of England. The military assistance of 1340 was surely decided on by that group that hoped thereby to regain their commercial privileges. During the progress of the military operations, they had probably realised the uselessness of this approach and had decided not to involve themselves further in the conflict.³³ This latter episode shows clearly how the urban authorities, according to their economic and political interests of the moment, were willing to use the armed forces at their disposal in order to obtain their objectives, even at the expense of a policy agreed on with the duke.

Particular obligations

Sometimes peculiar obligations linked localities to the duke. These might be towns foreign to the duchy, enclaves, or places of divided sovereignty. Aachen was obliged to furnish John III with a contingent of 50 men-at-arms because he was the *superior advocatus* of the town.³⁴ Since the *Oude Carte* of 1284,³⁵ Maastricht, being half Brabançon and half Liégeois, had a duty to remain neutral in any conflict between its two lords.³⁶ This occurred at the start of the fifteenth century (March 1407) when the magistrates confirmed their desire to remain neutral and refused to take part in the military adventures of Anthony. To be ready for any eventuality, they armed the town militia and declared a state of emergency.³⁷ In other circumstances, the town would serve its lord loyally. For example, in 1413, forty archers from Maastricht followed Anthony in a *chevauchée* in the duchy of Luxemburg.³⁸ There were even rare occasions when the town was seen to follow one of its lords against the second. This occurred in 1378, when Wenceslas used Maastricht as a base for his attacks against the land of Liège. Certain foreign enclaves within Brabant, such as Beauvechain and

³¹ Baerten, 'La bataille', pp. 72–80.

³² Des Marez, 'Un document inédit relatif à Jacques van Artevelde'; Prims, *Geschiedenis*, IV/1, pp. 88–9; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 414 et seq.

³³ Favresse, *L'avènement*, p. 98; De Sturler, *Les relations*, pp. 410–12, 475.

³⁴ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 156; Ernst, *Histoire*, V, pp. 32–3.

³⁵ Blondin, *De drie officieele teksten*; Crahay, *Coutumes*, pp. 3–20.

³⁶ Panhuysen, 'De Tweeherigheid van Maastricht'; Panhuysen, 'Maastricht omstreden door Brabant, Luik, Loon en Gelre'.

³⁷ Franquinet, 'Les sièges', pp. 210, 228–30; Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 310–11.

³⁸ AGR, CB, 7.903.

Tourinnes, enjoyed a similar regime.³⁹ Their inhabitants served in the militias of both Liège and Brabant, except in case of a war between the duke and the bishop, when they remained neutral. As far as Brabant was concerned, it was the *maire* of Leuven who ordered the local officers of the two villages to sound the bells and assemble the militias. Those refusing to serve were arrested and judged at Leuven.⁴⁰

In certain exceptional cases, a town could be obliged to perform an additional military service. We have a fine example of this in the towns of Leuven, Brussels, Nivelles and Tirlemont. In 1356, they had recognised Louis of Male as their legitimate sovereign. After the war, although the count of Flanders had abandoned any claim to lordship of the duchy, the towns had still to serve him, during his lifetime, for six weeks each time they were called on, against all enemies except for the duke and *pays* of Brabant. Under the banner of each town were to be found two barons, two knights and twenty-five men-at-arms. All these combatants would serve at the towns' expense.⁴¹ This obligation, I might even say this punishment, is so peculiar that numerous authors mention it in their chronicles.⁴² We find a similar example in the peace of Caster (11 June 1376). In this treaty, which resolved the dispute between Liège and Brabant, it was specified that twenty men-at-arms from Saint-Trond would serve the duke at his pleasure for one month. This duty was imposed on the town following the aggression which it had permitted against Wenceslas and his escort some years before.⁴³

Evolution of the organisation of the urban militias

The evolution of the urban military institutions can be divided into four stages. In the first period, all the townspeople formed a common army. During the second phase, the trades would gain greater importance and form the kernel of the militias. In a third phase, the guilds or companies would play a preponderant role. Finally, mercenaries would replace the men of the trades and guilds. These different stages developed at different rates in different places. It is also not unknown to see a backward step, according to the fortunes of the antagonistic forces that clashed over the control of the town.

First period (twelfth to mid-thirteenth century)

Many of the ancient towns had sprung up in the neighbourhood of a fortified place. This stronghold was important for the defence of the urban nucleus and the inhabitants found refuge there. At the end of the twelfth century, these agglomerations were expanding. With the growth of the population, it became

³⁹ On 8 July 1288, John I ceded to the bishop of Liège the high justice over Tourinnes, but he retained *l'ost comon* (VH, pp. 460–2).

⁴⁰ AGR, Mss div., 5/D, f. 75; CB, 7.766.

⁴¹ BY, II, pp. 544, 547.

⁴² De Budt, *Chronicon*, pp. 332–3; *Rymkronyk van Vlaenderen*, p. 849.

⁴³ AVL, 4.999, f. 87 v.; Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, p. 248–250.

necessary to fortify the whole township as it was impossible to shift all the population to safety. The guard and upkeep of these fortifications required the participation of a large number of townspeople and a structured military organisation. We know the situations of several Flemish towns in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Wyffels, taking the examples of the towns of Valenciennes, Douai, Saint-Omer, Lille, Tournai and Ypres, has clearly shown that the military unit of the time was the constabulary (*connestabularia*, *connestablies*), placed under the orders of one or more constables (*connestabularius*, *connestables*).⁴⁴ It is very likely that the situation was similar in many places in Brabant. In the fourteenth century, the presence of a constable (*conincstavels*) at the head of the archers of the town of Leuven is possibly a survival from an earlier organisation based on the constabulary.⁴⁵

Initially, all the townsmen without distinction had to take up arms when the town was in danger. This is why they were obliged to obtain their own weapons and keep them at home so as to be always ready to serve. In 1228, for example, Michel Wichmar, *burgensis* of Brussels, mentioned in his will a sword (*spada*) and a cuirass (*lorica*).⁴⁶ The patricians, made up of the richest and most powerful families of the town, like the knights, fought on horseback.⁴⁷ They were often vassals of the duke and in this character participated in military expeditions. Even in the case of a 'common war', these patricians could choose to march under the banner of the duke or that of the town.⁴⁸ The others fought on foot. At the end of the twelfth century, the *échevins*, local representatives of the duke, began to play a prominent role in the government of the town. It is therefore unsurprising to see them take part in military expeditions. It is very likely that they also exercised some command. The town's treasury may have served to defray their expenses during expeditions ordered by the magistrate. This was not the case when they accompanied the duke. On 26 March 1235 (n. st.), Henry I ordered the *échevins* of Brussels to carry out at their own expense all their movements in his service.⁴⁹ At this time, the ducal officer (*bailli*, *maire*, *amman*, *écoutète*) probably collaborated with the magistrate since in 1335, in the accounts of John of Heiden, *amman* of Brussels, we find the following rubric: *pro oleo et cordis ad pulsandum campanam*.⁵⁰ The entry being surrounded by other expenses for the army, no doubt this was the bell used to summon the militia.⁵¹

Second period (mid-thirteenth to early fifteenth century)

As the trades integrated themselves into the institutional and political systems of the town, so also they began to take an active part in its military enterprises.

⁴⁴ Wyffels, *De oorsprong*, pp. 108–10.

⁴⁵ AVL, 4.995, f. 24.

⁴⁶ Despy, 'Secteurs', pp. 163–5.

⁴⁷ Bonenfant, 'Le premier', p. 568; Aurell, *La noblesse*, pp. 72–5.

⁴⁸ De Nave, 'Een Antwerpse', p. 7.

⁴⁹ Favresse, 'Actes', pp. 404–6.

⁵⁰ AGR, CR, 2.603.

⁵¹ Kerremans, *Etude*, p. 215.

Once more, the lack of sources does not allow us to trace the changeover from a system based on the constabulary, probably a creation of the urban authorities, to a system based on the trades and probably originated by them.⁵² The earliest democratic movement in Brabant of which we have any record dates to 1248, when the fullers of Léau rose up and attempted unsuccessfully to form a corporation.⁵³ It is therefore not surprising that the first mention of a military organisation in the trades appears a little later, in 1267 at Leuven.⁵⁴

Let us examine the example of Brussels in detail. From the start of the fourteenth century, the trades were organised militarily since in 1303, the fellmongers (*pelsmakers*) who handled sheepskins, played a distinguished role in the war against the town of Malines.⁵⁵ The situation changed dramatically a few years later. On 12 June 1306, following an unsuccessful revolt by the workers in Brussels, it was decided that they could no longer assemble their members without the authorisation of the *amman* and the magistrate, and that representatives of these authorities should attend their debates. They no longer had the right to charge a subscription nor to possess a common treasury (*gemeene borse*) without the authorisation of these same governors.⁵⁶ as this treasury might be used to acquire weapons or finance their subversive activities.⁵⁷ The service of the trades was, however, indispensable. The authorities had soon to call for their help once more. In 1318, they took part in the expedition against the lord of Fauquemont, but after the campaign, they had to return all their weapons to the lineages.⁵⁸

On 11 May 1339, to free Brussels from its debts, the magistrate decided to reduce the expenses of the town. At this time, he fixed precisely the remuneration of the magistrates and other urban functionaries. This document has a wealth of detail concerning the organisation of the militia of Brussels.⁵⁹ During an expedition, the troops would be accompanied by four *échevins* (*scepenen*), a receiver (*rentmeestre*), a town clerk (*stad clerken*), three squires (*knapen*) and a squire charged with carrying the town's banner (*stad baniere*). Two trumpeters (*trompeneren*) and two pipers (*pypeneren*), along with a priest whose duty was to say Mass, were also included. They received from the town a salary fixed at five *florins* of Florence for the *échevins* and the receiver, at two *florins* for the secretary and the standard-bearer, who also had the right to a horse (*banierpaert*) for the duration of the campaign, and at one *florin* for the other squires, the priest and the musicians, who had also to provide their own horses for the town's service. The *échevins* and the receiver would have at their disposal four carts (*waghene*) to transport their tents and their armour. The doyens and

⁵² For des Marez, the military organisation of the workers was the result of a spontaneous cooperation among the members of the trades, without the intervention of the authorities or any other factor (Des Marez, 'La premières étapes', pp. 428–31).

⁵³ Bonenfant, 'Le premier', p. 574.

⁵⁴ BY, I, pp. 664–5; Cuvelier, 'De oorsprong', p. 159; Cuvelier, 'Documents', p. 262.

⁵⁵ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 81.

⁵⁶ *Den luyster*, I, p. 67.

⁵⁷ Favresse, 'Considérations', pp. 203–4.

⁵⁸ *Den luyster*, I, p. 85.

⁵⁹ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 104–8; Favresse, 'Documents', pp. 118–30.

the *huit* of the guild could not camp with the weavers or the fullers or impose upon them the expenses of their upkeep, the carts, the horses and the tents. This act shows also that the weavers enjoyed a certain status. This is confirmed by a charter of June 1340 where the weavers (*tapijtwevers*) benefited from the loan of wagons from a religious institution when they went to war.⁶⁰ It seems that this was the only trade to enjoy such an advantage at that time. Later, other trades would enjoy the same facilities. For example, in 1387, the t'Hof in Dal had to provide a cart (*waghen*) and two horses to the glove makers in wartime. If the cart or the horses were lost, the trade owed no indemnity beyond the hire charge fixed by the town.⁶¹

Thus, at the end of the fourteenth century, the military organisation of the trades was firmly established. On campaign, each artisan marched under his trade's banner and he had to respect the oaths and customs of their craft as they did in the town.⁶² As the townsfolk were equipped at their own expense,⁶³ the artisans had also to obtain their own weapons. In 1377, any fuller wishing to become a master had to possess a haubergeon or a coat of plate.⁶⁴ The ordinance of 14 January 1392 (n. st.) tells us that the corporation of fishmongers required that everyone should be equipped according to their means when they joined the association.⁶⁵ On the other hand, the corporation undertook the expense of acquiring those objects that served the whole group, such as carts and tents. For these purchases, a part of the subscription fees, or a large part of the fines imposed for breaking the regulations, was used.⁶⁶ The magistrate helped them by increasing the fees for entry into the corporations. On 6 October 1374, this privilege was granted to the coopers because, the previous year, they had had some preparatory expenses for the service of the duke and the town. On 7 November 1386, it was the turn of tallow boilers (*graisniers*), in recompense for their service done during the second war of Guelders. The same went for the locksmiths on 17 February 1394, for the carpenters on 9 February 1399 and for the fishmongers on 12 February 1399.⁶⁷ It is likely that the town provided some of the equipment for the militiamen.⁶⁸ In 1359, we know that the town had an arsenal in which arms and munitions were kept, called *ghescutte*.⁶⁹ On 12 September 1378, an ordinance from the magistrate required that great care should be taken over the care of the munitions, cannons and tents, so that they should be usable at need. It was strictly forbidden to give them away, lend them

⁶⁰ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 22.

⁶¹ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, p. 390.

⁶² Favresse, 'Les premiers', pp. 79–83.

⁶³ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, p. 387.

⁶⁴ Van Den Heuvel, *De ambachtsgilden*, I, pp. 43, 87, 105, 108, 111, 207.

⁶⁵ Favresse, 'Les premiers', pp. 79–83.

⁶⁶ Favresse, 'Les premiers', pp. 50–2, 54–7, 60–2.

⁶⁷ AVB, 1.447.

⁶⁸ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, p. 387.

⁶⁹ Favresse, 'Documents', p. 137. It was no doubt there that the authorities of Léau placed the 10,000 crossbow-bolt heads purchased in the space of three months in 1379 (AGR, CR, 182).

or hire them out.⁷⁰ The town also had its own carts intended to transport food for the combatants.⁷¹ Finally, a sworn bow maker made the bows of which the town and its people were in need.⁷²

The major part played by the craft guilds does not indicate that the other inhabitants of the town were excused from service. On 16 September 1348, it was ordained that all the townsmen, resident and non-resident, had to take part in expeditions. Refusal to serve the town brought with it the loss of the rights of *bourgeoisie*. The only exception made was for those in the service of the duke.⁷³ This obligation appears clearly if indirectly in the oath taken by all those admitted to the *bourgeoisie* of Brussels.⁷⁴ This confirms this dual military obligation of the townsmen, towards the town and towards the duke. The latter took obviously priority. The medieval town did not consist only of the urban nucleus. Outside the walls, there was a territory whose inhabitants enjoyed the same rights, and were bound to the same obligations, as the townsmen. This was the freehold, and its people also owed military service. The troops, gathered under the banner of Saint Michael were made up not only of the inhabitants of the town proper, but also the inhabitants of the six *mairies* (Asse, Merchtem, Capelle-au-Bois, Campenhout, Vilvorde and Rhode-Saint-Genèse). The townsmen of Brussels who had their own tents and carts could join a *mairie* of their choice. The whole ensemble was supposed to gather according their administrative location (*circule, tsingel*)⁷⁵ of which Brussels and Vilvorde formed the rearguard (*zelen tgat houden*).⁷⁶

The reforms of 1421

On 11 February 1421, major political reforms were decided.⁷⁷ Henceforward, the craft guilds would be grouped into nine bodies called *nations*. It was therefore necessary to revise the military organisation of the town on this basis. In case of an alert, due to a fire or any other cause, ten men from the same neighbourhood were to gather under the direction of a captain (*capitijn*), chosen by them and with the consent of the *échevins*, the burgomasters and the counsellors. This group should then join with the closest other groups of ten and

⁷⁰ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 48; Mss div., 28, f. 127 v.

⁷¹ The town of Brussels possessed about twenty carts (AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 76).

⁷² AVB, *Perquementboeck mette taitsen*, f. 31. This was also the case in Leuven (Van Uytven, *Stadsfinanciën*, pp. 173–4).

⁷³ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 154.

⁷⁴ 'Ick u gelove sekere en sweere dat ick van dese dage voirtaen sal zyn goet en getrouwe onsen genedigen heere den heere den hertoge van Brabant ende stadt van Brussel, dat ick niet en sal verraden zyn lant, zyne steden, zyne sloten, zyne ondersaeten, noch zyn volck; de gebode van der stadt ende koeren der selver sal ick hulpen houden nae myn leste macht en nae myn beste wetenheit. Soe hulpe my God en alle zyne heyligen' (Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 153).

⁷⁵ This was not a tactical disposition, as certain authors have claimed, but rather an administrative division of the judicial circumscriptions. The usage of the term *cinghels* in an act of Anvers from the start of the fifteenth century is clear on this point (De Nave, 'Een Antwerpse', p. 3).

⁷⁶ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 76.

⁷⁷ Favresse, 'Esquisse', p. 230 et seq.

thus form a troop of one hundred men, under the orders of a *centenier* (*hondersteman*). This group was considered strong enough to travel without fear to the place where it was needed to serve the duke or the town. The *jurés* of the trades were to observe the good execution of these new arrangements and were invested with the right to punish, as a public example, those who refused to join their group, who allowed themselves to raise a tumult or who were otherwise guilty of any disorder.⁷⁸ In the same spirit, two captains of artillery shared the office: one being a member of the lineages, the other of the *nations*.⁷⁹ This new way of organising the troops was surely intended to increase the cohesion and solidarity among the militiamen.

On 20 April 1422, the magistrate named William, lord of Bigard, captain of the city (*capyteyn te sijne in der stad van Bruessel*). He would have command over the groups of one hundred and was to defend the town hall, the ramparts and the gates of the town.⁸⁰ This individual remained in office until December 1423⁸¹ and, with the agreement of the magistrate, he made several decisions concerning the military organisation of the militias. He specified the military authority of the *centeniers*,⁸² determined the guard posts and the number of men to be placed on the walls,⁸³ banned the shooting guilds,⁸⁴ etc. The appearance of a captain of the town should not be surprising. At the local level, as long as the militias were assembled and commanded by a ducal officer, the autonomy and the initiative of the city remained limited, even though the *échevins* took part in the command.⁸⁵ It is therefore natural to see the appearance, both in Leuven and in Brussels, of independent characters devoted to the town. The attitude of Peter Couterel at Leuven, or the regime of captaincy introduced by the constitution of 1421 in Brussels, are two good examples. Being judged too dangerous by the duke and the patricians, these individuals would never remain long in their post.⁸⁶ I shall not dwell overmuch on this 'revolutionary' organisation, as I have gone beyond the chronological limits of this work, and it has already been the subject of a detailed study.⁸⁷

The military organisation of the trades was not without inconveniences for the oligarchies in power. Being once organised and armed, the workers could easily turn against the masters of the city. The prince and the patricians were therefore constantly wary of them. This ambiguity may perhaps explain the reluctance to organise and arm the militias in a more effective fashion as in Flanders. At the slightest alarm, the trades were required to lay down their

⁷⁸ *Den luyster*, II, pp. 23–31; Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 291–303.

⁷⁹ Favresse, *L'avènement*, p. 299; Zylbergeld, 'L'artillerie', pp. 621 et seq.

⁸⁰ Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 303–6.

⁸¹ DD, III, p. 432.

⁸² AVB, *Swerdtboeck*, f. 45 v.

⁸³ *Den luyster*, II, p. 43.

⁸⁴ AVB, *Swerdtboeck*, f. 46.

⁸⁵ Godding, 'Le pouvoir', p. 101; Des Marez, *L'organisation*, p. 391.

⁸⁶ Let us note, on this subject, the act of nomination of Bernard (I), lord of Bornival, as captain of Leuven in 1354, which would merit a detailed analysis (Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1266–8; Willems, 'Aenstelling van Bernard, Heer van Borgneval').

⁸⁷ Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 260–86.

weapons. In June 1306, John II gave such an order to the workers of Brussels.⁸⁸ In September 1306, the patricians of Leuven were authorised to require the same. The artisans had to give up all their arms and inspections were carried out by the city council or by the *maire* to verify compliance with this ordinance.⁸⁹ Again, at Leuven, on 1 April 1341, John III decreed that no weaver might henceforth be part of the company of archers nor possess a bow.⁹⁰ After the revolt in Brussels in 1360, the fullers, the weavers and the butchers could no longer bear any weapons or carry knives.⁹¹ In 1380, when the town of Leuven rebelled once more, Wenceslas, who feared that the disorder might spread across the duchy, disarmed the trades of Brussels and ordered that they should bring him the keys of the town.⁹² Of course, all these bans could never prevent the members of the trades from possessing, either illegally or simply by virtue of their occupation, tools capable of being used dangerously. The butchers of Brussels, armed with fearsome knives during their revolt in 1360, are a good example of this ineffectiveness. For van Gerven, this is one of the major reasons accounting for the weakness of the urban militia of Brabant in comparison to those of Flanders or Liège.⁹³ While this was no doubt a major factor, its importance should not be overestimated. Let us not forget that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the towns of the neighbouring principalities to Brabant were prey to much more serious social unrest.

Third period (first half of the fifteenth century)

The militiamen, unlike men-at-arms, were not professional warriors. Arming them was not sufficient to turn them into good combatants, leaving aside their morale and willingness to fight. The situation became even more difficult with the appearance of weapons requiring a particular skill and appropriate training, such as the bow, the crossbow and, later, firearms. The solution adopted by the towns was to establish groups of combatants that might almost be described as semi-professional: the military guilds.⁹⁴ Certain authors trace their development to the end of the twelfth century,⁹⁵ but it seems we should postpone this date. The authorities rapidly recognised these associations and the duke or the Magistracy would strictly control their organisation. The competence of their members made them preferable to the undisciplined and less effective common troops. For this reason, they gradually replaced the militias and formed a small-armed force at the disposal of the magistrate for the maintenance of order and for the defence of the city. In addition, unlike the common people, these

⁸⁸ *Den luyster*, I, p. 67.

⁸⁹ *BY*, I, pp. 732, 736.

⁹⁰ *AVL*, 1.307. In 1340, the weavers of Leuven rebelled while the patricians were engaged in the siege of Tournai (Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 30; Vander Linden, *Geschiedenis*, p. 22).

⁹¹ *AVB*, A.-Thymo, II, f. 213.

⁹² Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 138.

⁹³ Van Gerven, 'War', pp. 187 et seq.

⁹⁴ Jolles, *De schuttersgilden en schutterijen van Noord-Brabant*; Ising, *Brabantse Schuttersgilden*; Lijten, 'Het ontstaan der schuttersgilden op het platteland van Brabant'; Van Autenboer, *De kaarten van de schuttersgilden van het hertogdom Brabant*.

⁹⁵ Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, pp. 41–2, 47.

companies were less likely to turn their weapons against the town. Thus, these associations were privileged but also subject to severe discipline and regular training. We cannot however consider them as a standing army, as their strength was only sufficient for police actions. Companies of archers were present at different times in most of the towns (Aarschot, Antwerp, Brussels, Hannut, Helmond, Heusden, Jodoigne, Landen, Lierre, Limburg, Leuven, Maastricht, Nivelles, Sittard, Tervuren, Turnhout, Vilvorde etc.). In certain places, there were more than one company. In Leuven, in the fourteenth century, there were a great and a small company of crossbowmen (*de groote gulde van den voetbooge*; *de cleine gulde van den voetbooge*). In the fifteenth century there was also the guild of hand gunners (*de bruerschap oft gulden van den coloverneren*).⁹⁶ When several companies existed in the same city, they often became rivals. To avoid this problem, the duke sometimes forced them to merge or forbade the creation of a new guild. John III acted thus when he merged the two guilds of crossbowmen in Brussels, one called the *Grand serment* and meeting at the church of Notre-Dame du Sablon, the other named after Saint-Laurent and meeting in the *Warmoesbroec*.⁹⁷

The members of the guilds, being called to arms far more often than the militia, had their duties clearly established and enjoyed numerous privileges. On 18 February 1344, the company of crossbowmen and the town council of Leuven reached an agreement over the services to be done by the guild in peacetime in the city and outside it in wartime. The archers, when asked by the town, had to go on campaign. Each would receive 4 *sous* for a day and a night outside, and had to be provided with fire and light. While carrying out the service of the town, his expenses would be borne by the town. On the other hand, the city could ask the prince to support them during ducal expeditions. If he refused, the town had to pay the archer 6 *sous*, so long as he was accompanied by a servant. Their leader, the *conincstavel*, received double pay. The archers had some other advantages; the town had also to provide their clothing, and while they were on an expedition, they no longer had to pay some of their taxes.⁹⁸ Often, the members of these societies were required to obtain arms of good quality at their own expense. In Maastricht, for example, each archer had to be equipped with a mail coat or a cuirass, a bow and 24 arrows.⁹⁹ The duke granted them certain liberties. The twenty-four crossbowmen of Landen were exempted from all taxes from 10 April 1356. John IV and Philip of Saint-Pol would confirm this privilege on 15 May 1415 and on 12 February 1429.¹⁰⁰ The thirty-six crossbowmen of Hannut were similarly exempt as of 8 July 1362. Anthony confirmed this privilege on 5 February 1407 (n. st.).¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ AVL, *Groot Gemeynboeck*, f. 12.

⁹⁷ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 146 v.; CC, 8, f. 477 v.; BY, II, pp. 642–4.

⁹⁸ Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1257–9.

⁹⁹ Franquinet, 'De handboogschutters', p. 430.

¹⁰⁰ BR, Mss, 14.511, f. 184; AGR, CC, 15.716, I, f. 14; CC, 2.404, f. 166; CC, 15.720, X, f. 19 v.

¹⁰¹ AGR, CC, 8, f. 208.

The quality of the members of a company depended on the intensity of their training, and the duke was aware of this. It was doubtless for this reason that Anthony obtained, on 7 November 1405, letters of remission for John Heylen, townsman of Lierre, who had accidentally caused the death of a child of seven or eight years while practising at shooting with his companions in the gardens of the crossbowmen in the town.¹⁰² Similarly, on 5 December 1419, John IV granted to the members of the *Grande gilde de l'arbalète* in Vilvorde a new privilege. If one of them, while drawing his bow, accidentally killed or wounded someone, he would not be brought to judgment on that account.¹⁰³ Taking part in shooting competitions was an excellent form of training. On 13 July 1387, a great tourney was organised at Mons. Most of the towns that took part were situated in Zeeland and in Holland, principalities then under the same sovereignty as Hainault, but we also find there several places in Brabant such as Leuven, Brussels, Vilvorde, Helmond, Eindhoven, Malines, Lierre, Antwerp, Geertruidenberg, Maastricht, Léau, Diest and Tirlemont. Forty-eight towns of the Low Countries took part in the tournament at Tournai in 1394. The Bruxellois won the fourth prize, consisting of two gilded silver cups worth two and a half marks.¹⁰⁴ In 1397, the archers of Leuven won first prize at Overijse, a live stag.¹⁰⁵ In a certain sense, we might compare their shooting contests, where the members of bourgeoisie could shine, to the tournaments reserved for the nobility and chivalry.

The membership of the guilds rarely exceeded one hundred and was usually far lower. In Leuven, for example, where the democratic element was so strong, the membership of the guild of the *Vieille Arbalète* was only 60 and that of the *Jeune Arbalète* was 30, later increased to 45 by John III.¹⁰⁶ While this sufficed for the protection of the town, the limited numbers meant that the dukes of Brabant never disposed of a sufficiently large number of archers on the battlefield to be able to use defensive tactics similar to those used by the English from the second half of the fourteenth century.

Fourth period (second half of the fifteenth century)

In the second half of the fifteenth century, military obligations changed entirely. The military companies survived only as long as the independence of their community. They vanished as military units under the dukes of Burgundy. The artisans no longer provided their personal service, but instead paid a contribution for the war. This was used to equip a certain number of mercenaries. The different corporations had also to furnish tents, carts or weapons to these stipendiaries.¹⁰⁷ This practice is more ancient than it might appear. Already in 1303,

¹⁰² AGR, CC, 11, f. 231.

¹⁰³ Nauwelaers, *Histoire*, p. 451.

¹⁰⁴ The crossbowmen of Brussels, Nivelles, Vilvorde, Lierre, Antwerp and Malines took part (Chotin, *Histoire*, I, pp. 349–57; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 172; De Vigne, *Recherches*, p. 23).

¹⁰⁵ Molanus, *Historiae*, II, p. 864.

¹⁰⁶ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', pp. 149–50.

¹⁰⁷ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, pp. 394 et seq.; Verhavert, *Het Ambachtswezen*, pp. 95–6;

during the war against Malines, the people of Brussels had paid a special tax of 2,500 *ponden* destined to pay mercenaries (*van soudieren te houdene*).¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, this was an unusual case, whereas in the fifteenth century it became the rule. I shall not dwell further on a period far removed from the chronological boundaries of this work.

The militia at the service of the town

Guarding the fortifications

A townsman was bound to a double military obligation: towards the prince, in certain well-defined cases, and towards the town which he inhabited. The primary role of the militia was the defence of the urban territory, which in turn took two forms: guarding the fortifications of the town, and police actions. Because the duke's means did not allow him to provide the men necessary for keeping watch, it was for the towns themselves, at least those with the good fortune to be protected by a curtain wall, to set a guard over the ramparts and the gates. The responsibility of the local authorities, and the fact that the duke relied on them, appears clearly in 1380 when Wenceslas was concerned for the protection of the towns of Thuin and Fosses, whose inhabitants had left, without arranging a defence, when going to Luxemburg.¹⁰⁹ At the outset, it was probable that any townsman could, one way or another, be called on, probably by the *échevins*, to fulfil this duty.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, the silence of the archives does not allow us to describe the relevant organisation. Over time, each place developed its own organisation bound up with its own history.¹¹¹

Let us concentrate on the case of Brussels. In 1339, a watchman was stationed in the tower of the Saint-Nicolas' church in the centre of the town,¹¹² and received for this work two sets of clothes per year and 40 *schell.* as a monthly salary.¹¹³ The function of this individual is unclear. He may have been charged with watching the neighbourhood, but also with looking over the town to observe the starting of fires or other possible disasters. At the end of the fourteenth century, the trades took over the service of the watch. Each corporation called on its members and chose those who would be charged with this mission. None might fail thereof, under pain of a fine. A fishmonger who refused the watch had to pay 6 *livres*,¹¹⁴ while the carpenter who did not answer the call was

Meulemans, 'Bijdragen . . . geslachten', pp. 118–19; Salamagne, 'La défense des villes des Pays-Bas'.

¹⁰⁸ *Den luyster*, I, p. 62.

¹⁰⁹ AGR, CB, 5.721.

¹¹⁰ Cuvelier thinks that this was true during the twelfth century (Cuvelier, *Inventaire*, IV, pp. 74–5).

¹¹¹ The organisation of the night watch in the town of Saint-Trond is, fortunately, known to us (Straven, *Inventaire*, I, pp. 296–7). See also Kempeneer, 'Les aliénations', pp. 113–14.

¹¹² The document says only *op den Toren*, but this means the tour Saint-Nicolas, as states in a document of 1359: *de wachtre van Sente Claeus* (Favresse, 'Documents', p. 135).

¹¹³ *Den luyster*, I, p. 105; Favresse, 'Documents', p. 123.

¹¹⁴ Ordinance of 14 January 1392 (n. st.) (AVB, *Ordonnantien der Ambachten*, f. 16).

liable to a fine of 3 *plaques*.¹¹⁵ On one of the rare accounts from the town, dated October 1405, we learn that two gatekeepers guarded each of the gates of the wall.¹¹⁶

After the democratic victory of 1421, there was a complete reorganisation of the system of guards, inspired by the new political constitution. The nine *nations* gained the right to place seven gatekeepers to guard the outer gates of the town, alongside seven gatekeepers named by the lineages. The adoption of this measure, a consequence of the new division of power between the patricians and the plebeians, was important, as the control of the gates by the lineages had always placed the city at their mercy. It suffices to recall the failure of the weavers and the fullers before the *Steenporte* and their inability to enter the town during the revolt of 1360. Henceforward, to open or close a gate, the cooperation of the two social groups was required. To each entrance two different locks were applied, whose keys were entrusted, the one to the lineages, the other to the *nations*. The lineages deposited their key in the 'traditional place';¹¹⁷ the *nations* delivered theirs to the house of their burgomaster or their treasurer. If it is happened that someone had to let in or out during the night, it was forbidden to open the gate without the presence of the burgomaster and two counsellors from the *nations*. The *nations* had to station, at the gates entrusted to them, a gatekeeper and as many captains as the lineages placed there. If need be, each of them had to man the ramparts and towers with soldiers, from the gate under their guard as far as the next.¹¹⁸ On 22 August 1422, William, lord of Bigard and captain of Brussels, divided the nine *nations* in the guard of the ramparts. In practice, the lineages and *nations* divided the gates and towers of the town among themselves. The lineage of 's Leeuws and the *nation* Notre-Dame held the gate of Laken; the lineage of Sweert and the *nation* Saint-Gille, the gate of Flanders; the lineage of Serhuygs and the *nation* Saint-Laurent, the gate of Obbruessel or of Hal; the lineage of Coudenberg and the *nation* Saint-Géry, that of Schaarbeek or of Cologne; the lineage of Steenweeghs and the *nation* Saint-Jean, that of Leuven; the lineage of Ser Roeloffs and the *nation* Saint-Christophe, the gate called *Ten Cruyskene* or of Anderlecht; and lastly, the lineage of Rodenbeke and the *nation* Saint-Jacques, that of Coudenberg. As there remained two *nations* with nothing to guard, there being no more gates, it was decided, for the sake of balance among the *nations*, that those of Saint-Pierre should hold the tower called *Blauwen thoren* or *Tour-Bleue*, and those of Saint-Nicolas should guard the *Wollendries thoren* or *Pré-aux-Laines*.¹¹⁹ At the end of the fifteenth century, as indicated by an account from 1485–86, each of the town's seven gates was still guarded by two porters.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Ordinance of 22 April 1411 (AVB, *Ordonnantien der Ambachten*, f. 16).

¹¹⁶ Bernard, 'Le compte', p. 287.

¹¹⁷ I have not been able to identify this 'traditional place'. At Leuven, on 29 June 1267, John I ordered that the keys of the gates of the town should be kept by the mayoral council, the *échevins* and the *jurés* (AVL, 1.283).

¹¹⁸ *Den luyster*, II, pp. 23–31; Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 291–303.

¹¹⁹ *Den luyster*, II, p. 43. See map 5.

¹²⁰ AGR, CC, 30.942, f. 132.

We have little knowledge of the organisation of the system of defence in small towns and villages not provided with a curtain wall. It is likely that a system of patrols was organised there. Certain places seem to have had difficulty in establishing a functional organisation. Some were even unable to defend themselves effectively in a crisis. The most usual alternative was to have recourse to mercenaries. During the war of the succession of Brabant, the magistrate of Lierre declared that, in the absence of John, lord of Meer, and by reason of the captivity of John of Broekhuizen and his companions in arms, he had been forced to entrust the defence of the town to archers from England, Holland, Guelders, the bishopric of Utrecht and elsewhere, and also to cannoneers.¹²¹ We should not underestimate the strategic importance of these guards. Although purely passive, they were vital to the good defence of the duchy. In 1213, at the battle of Steppes, the urban militias were absent from the field of battle; it is probable that the duke had preferred to rely on the townspeople garrisoning the urban fortifications to defend the territory of Brabant against the enemy's *chevauchées*.¹²²

The urban militias as an instrument of local power

The towns had the right to protect themselves and to take vengeance against their enemies. Each townsman had the duty to defend the community and its members. It is enough for one of them to shout 'Aux Armes', 'Wapene' or 'Commune' and immediately the others must run to his help. Those who would not answer this call were severely punished.¹²³ In 1234, the duke granted to Leuven that the magistrate could assemble the inhabitants, by sounding the common bell (*campana cummaniae*), for an expedition to redress the wrongs done to one of their own. In this case, everyone had to do military service on pain of a fine.¹²⁴ That same year, Grave received similar privileges, namely the ability to organise autonomous punitive expeditions.¹²⁵ In 1381, Wenceslas and Joan allowed the townspeople of Nivelles to repulse by force strangers attempting to attack the city or its people, and to arrest the assailants so as to bring them to the justice of the place of their arrest. They did not have to answer for the wounds or deaths they caused in such circumstances, unless the victims were in the service of the duke or duchess.¹²⁶

This right of self-defence was not a right to rebel. The towns were conscious of the power they gained by the possession of a small private army. They took advantage of this to carry out small-scale military expeditions. This was the case in 1365, when the Magistracy of Leuven sent their militia to the defence of the fortress of Rummen, besieged and then taken by the troops of John of Arkel,

¹²¹ AGR, CB, 1.374, 1.375.

¹²² Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, pp. 273, 275; Verbruggen, *De krijgskunst*, pp. 390 et seq.; Gaier, *Grandes*, pp. 55–69.

¹²³ For example, the *Keure* of Antwerp (Mertens and Torfs, *Geschiedenis*, II, p. 29).

¹²⁴ BY, I, pp. 638; Vander Linden, *Histoire*, p. 35; Cuvelier, *Inventaire*, IV, pp. 80–1.

¹²⁵ Cuvelier, *Les institutions*, pp. 6–7.

¹²⁶ AGR, Mss div., f. 136.

bishop of Liège.¹²⁷ The attack on the castle of Gaasbeek by the people of Brussels, later helped by contingents from the other Brabançon cities, is also highly representative. I shall not expand on the police operations carried out by the urban militias, as these generally took place in peacetime and usually concerned the suppression of brigandage and the safety of the roads. I should however emphasise that this kind of mission resembled, in its organisation, a small military expedition. For example, in 1406, Philip van der Couderborch, *maire* of Tirlemont, demanded help from the archers of Léau and Landen, as well as from part of the local population, to besiege the church of Heylisseem, where there had taken refuge some *doetslaghers ende vredebrekers*.¹²⁸

The urban militias at the service of the duke

In the thirteenth century, the towns seem to have made use of their rights not to serve the duke except in the case of a defensive war. Maybe they did not yet feel themselves strong enough to follow their prince in his military adventures. Be this as it may, they were not present at the two great encounters of that century. At the battle of Steppes (1213) the militias were absent from the battlefield.¹²⁹ Contrary to the opinions stated by Willems and Bonenfant, the same was true for the battle of Worringen (1288).¹³⁰ It is nonetheless possible that certain towns may have provided garrisons for some fortresses¹³¹ and contributed to the upkeep of the men-at-arms of John I.¹³²

In the fourteenth century, the situation changed and urban contingents were more and more frequently present on the battlefield. The growing political importance of the towns surely accounts for this change of heart. In a surprising fashion, they were often a valuable partner to the duke. In 1303, the urban militias played an important role in the suppression of the rebellion of the town of Malines.¹³³ John III succeeded in capturing the fortress of Sittard in ten days thanks to the pugnaciousness of the common troops (1318).¹³⁴ During the great coalition against Brabant (1332–34), the duke could only count on *sijn volc uut sinen lande*¹³⁵ and the towns played an active part in defending the duchy.¹³⁶ They also distinguished themselves during the second and third wars of Guelders, particularly the Brussels contingent, whose bravery alone almost

¹²⁷ Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, pp. 106–7.

¹²⁸ AGR, CC, 12.678, f. 38 v.

¹²⁹ Verbruggen, *De krijgskunst*, pp. 390 et seq.; Gaier, *Grandes*, pp. 55–69.

¹³⁰ VH, p. LII; Bonenfant, *Brabant*, p. 266; Verbruggen, *De krijgskunst*, p. 44; Van Uytven, 'Standenprivileges', p. 425.

¹³¹ Lehnart, *Die Schlacht*, pp. 137–49.

¹³² Hypothesis of Baerten, which has yet to be confirmed (Baerten, 'La bataille', p. 78).

¹³³ DD, II, p. 476.

¹³⁴ BY, I, pp. 451–8; DD, II, p. 498.

¹³⁵ BY, I, p. 498.

¹³⁶ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 149.

allowed the Brabançons to retake the town of Grave. They paid the price, suffering high losses.¹³⁷

The attitude of the militias was not always exemplary. I shall not speak further of the rapid capitulation of the towns in 1356, having referred to it so often already. On the other hand, we should recall that one of the explanations for the sudden defeat at Scheut could be the lack of discipline of the militias of Brussels and Leuven, who had charged the enemy without order or formation and despite the advice of the leaders.¹³⁸ At Baesweiler, Jean Froissart accuses the Bruxellois of having impeded the good organisation of the army by their bulky baggage.¹³⁹ Discipline and respect for the hierarchy were never really the strong point of these combatants. During the first siege of Grave, the militias protested openly against the decisions of the captains of the army and threatened to break camp and return home.¹⁴⁰ In 1388, they caused the failure of negotiations of the highest importance. These approaches could have returned Grave to Brabant and thus ended the second war of Guelders.¹⁴¹ Despite this, they were no more docile during the second siege of the town and once again argued with their captains.¹⁴² The urban militias were thus as capable of the worst conduct as the best. They had their own organisation, their own leaders, and felt themselves more at the service of their town than of the duke. The duke had therefore to show tact if he wished to be sure of their agreement. One last example will suffice to illustrate this point. At the start of the reign of Anthony, the understanding between Antwerp and the duke was excellent. They provided a company of crossbowmen to serve in his expedition against the duke of Guelders (1407) when the other towns had refused him this service. Even so, once on the march, the militias from Antwerp argued with their ruler, whose choleric character they found unbearable. Finally, they turned back and abandoned the duke's *chevauchée*.¹⁴³

¹³⁷ DD, III, pp. 113–14.

¹³⁸ DD, III, p. 26; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 230–1.

¹³⁹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22.

¹⁴⁰ DD, III, p. 113; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 153.

¹⁴¹ DD, III, pp. 123–4; *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 116.

¹⁴² DD, III, p. 124; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 212–14.

¹⁴³ Prims, *Geschiedenis*, VI/1, pp. 7–10; Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 307–9.

10

Mercenaries, Specialists and Non-combatants

The mercenaries

Definitions

It is important to define what a mercenary is in the fourteenth century. Many foreign lords served the duke during the war of the succession of Brabant or the *chevauchée* of Jülich. Must they be counted as mercenaries? Certain authors say yes, but I do not agree. I think that it is important to distinguish the man-at-arms who served because of a fief-rente or an indenture from the simple mercenary. Garlan, although he was referring to the ancient world, proposes a simple and excellent definition:

The mercenary is a professional soldier whose conduct is dictated above all not by his belonging to a political community but by the desire for gain.¹

If I compare this with the situation of the foreigners at the orders of the duke, several remarks occur to us. Those combatants who served by virtue of a fief-rente or an indenture did so under the same conditions as the Brabançon combatants. The quittance delivered to William Smit, Jacques Ate, Richard Gille, Adam Cambridge, Thomas Selby, William Salisbury, Hughes Mariot and Gautier Salfinet, English men-at-arms, who had served Joan and Wenceslas during the war of the succession of Brabant is similar, both in its terms and in its form, to the charters delivered to the Brabançons.² Their obligations and their conditions of service were in all points the same.

We know that in the Middle Ages the ideas of nation and of nationality were still vague. These terms were not yet territorial. In a celebrated treatise written in 1352, Geoffroy de Charny contrasted those knights fighting at home with those fighting *en loyntaines marches*.³ For him, to fight at home was defined not by geography but by ethnicity. The knight thought of the defence of his honour or of his heritage, helping his friends or serving his lord.⁴ The ideal knight, according to Geoffroy de Charny, could thus easily find himself on battlefields scattered all over Europe and still be fighting at home. An individual such as Sweder of Abcoude had possessions in Holland, in Brabant and in Hainault. He was at once vassal of the duke of Brabant and of the count of Hainault, of

¹ Garlan, *La guerre*, p. 67.

² AGR, CB, 1.227.

³ De Charny, *Livre*, p. 465.

⁴ De Charny, *Livre*, p. 465.

Holland and of Zeeland. The duty to serve his honour, his family, his friends and his true lord could thus involve him in many adventures. He was evidently not the only one to have holdings scattered across several principalities of the Low Countries and many another noble must have been in the same situation. With the principle of the fief-rente, for which one owed homage, it was easy to multiply the numbers of one's sovereigns. In a period when the dukes of Burgundy, and above all the kings of England, made use of this kind of contract, the knights of Brabant could find themselves drawn into the crises of the Hundred Years' War and were often called on to serve in distant theatres of operations.

At that time, there existed a real community of men-at-arms that took no account at all of geographical or political limits. The majority of knights and nobles who belonged to it knew each other. They met during tournaments.⁵ They were present at the courts of the same sovereigns and took part in the same adventures.⁶ They had the same ideals, the same concerns, in short the same way of life, and formed a coherent and solid social group.⁷ An excellent testimony of this state of affairs is the armorial of Gelre Herald. At the end of the fourteenth century, this individual gathered in one volume the coats of arms of the knights of France as well as those of the Low Countries and the archbishoprics of Trier and Cologne.⁸ Since the forms of military service were the same, since the notion of being foreign did not apply, since a certain idea of obligation was often present and since they were all members of the same social group, whatever the motivations of these men-at-arms, they cannot be called mercenaries. This term should be reserved for soldiers coming from genuinely foreign groups, that is to say, those not linked by family, political or social links to those whom they served. It therefore applies, as we shall see, to a minority of the combatants during the period covered. For example, the engagement of foot soldiers and particularly of archers must be considered as such because here we can no longer speak of a community of arms.

The mercenaries called 'Brabançons' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

Before considering the fourteenth century, for the sake of completeness I should take a small step back in time. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, western and Byzantine narrative sources regularly referred to mercenaries called 'Brabançons' (*Brabantinis*, *Brabanceros*, *Brabansons*, *Brabançons*).⁹ They were found in the service of many European rulers, from the king of England to the

⁵ Van Winter, 'De middeleeuwse ridderschap als "classe sociale" '.

⁶ By 'adventure', we mean the journeys in Prussia, the crusade of Nicopolis (1396), etc.

⁷ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 63–73.

⁸ *Wapenboek ou Armorial de 1334 à 1372*; Adam-Even, *L'Armorial universel du Héraut Gelre*.

⁹ De Smet, *Notice sur Guillaume d'Ypres ou de Loo*; Henrard, 'Les mercenaires dits Brabançons au moyen âge'; Grundmann, 'Rotten und Brabanzonen-Soldner-Heere im 12. Jahrhundert'; Mens, 'De "Brabanciones" of bloeddorstige en plunderzieke avonturiers'; Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 131 et seq.

emperor of Germany, and even of some Byzantine emperors.¹⁰ It is clear that under this general title we find combatants coming not only from the duchy of Brabant, but from all the Low Countries. The name given to them is nonetheless significant and it is probable that a majority of them, at least to begin with, originated from the centre of Lower-Lotharingia. According to Lot and Fawtier, it was the military incompetence of the townspeople that would have led rulers to have recourse to these mercenaries.¹¹ This is highly likely, and this would not be the last time that the sovereign would attempt to replace the militias composed of non-professional combatants with troops of a higher quality. The 'Brabançons', or at least the groups of mercenaries so called, disappeared at the end of the first half of the thirteenth century and they were unknown in the fourteenth century. As far as Brabant is concerned, they left the scene just as the economic situation improved and the towns were in full growth. These two phenomena perhaps explain their disappearance. It was then no longer necessary to go abroad to find work and the towns became capable of organising their militia in a more effective manner.

The mercenaries in Brabant in the fourteenth century

In 1357, Jean le Bel claimed that Wenceslas utilised mercenaries to protect his newly reconquered duchy.¹² The French chronicler, ill-informed about the complex relations that united the duchy of Brabant, on the one hand, and the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse, on the other, was referring to the many men-at-arms from these latter regions.¹³ These too should not be confused with simple mercenaries. Although many of these lords behaved dubiously and passed some of their time in attacking the rich merchants crossing the regions between the Meuse and the Rhine, they were nonetheless vassals of the dukes of Jülich, Guelders or Brabant. In addition, they were part of that famous community of arms. Despite their bad reputation, they were excellent warriors and regularly seconded the duke in his enterprises.¹⁴ The Brabançon sources give us no indication that the duke made use of mercenaries in the second half of the fourteenth century. Only a passage in the accounts of the *recette générale* for 1365–66 mentions the payment of a salary to some English archers.¹⁵ This was an exceptional case and, unfortunately, we know little more about their role or about their reasons for their employment. The absence of mercenaries in this period is easily explained. Thanks to the fief-rente and to the indenture, the duke was able to assemble a large army easily and rapidly.¹⁶ We do not know if this system was financially more sustainable, but it had the advantage of bringing

¹⁰ Maricq, 'Un 'comte de Brabant' et des "Brabançons" dans deux textes byzantins'.

¹¹ Lot and Fawtier, *Histoire*, I, p. 418; II, pp. 517–18.

¹² Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 237.

¹³ De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 7; Laurent and Quicke, 'La guerre', p. 96.

¹⁴ Anthony engaged them in 1406 and John IV called on their services in 1420–21 (AGR, CB, 8.163–8.164; Mss div., 5 bis, f. 25; AVB, A.-Thymo, III, f. 362 v.–364, 377–378 v.; BY, III, pp. 432–4, 448–54; DD, III, pp. 406–7).

¹⁵ AGR, CC, 2.352, f. 60.

¹⁶ We have a good example of this in 1338–1339 (Wauters, 'La formation d'une armée brabançonne').

together professionals of the same rank, fighting in the same manner and belonging to the same social group as the rest of the ducal army.

The situation of the Brabançon towns was very different. Unlike the men-at-arms, the townsfolk were not interested in warfare. Even if they were militarily organised, they preferred to stay at home and take care of their daily business. This was especially true of the trades.¹⁷ Hence, where possible, the town would recruit fighters so as to free the townspeople from armed service. In this case mercenaries were of course used. This was the case in Leuven, in 1303:

Particularly for the service which they have granted to us now, as a particular favour and not by virtue of any right which we or our ancestors have demanded or could demand, that they should keep mercenaries with the other people of our country, according to the part which it will suit them to pay, for a short time due to the war which we are now waging against our enemies at Malines, since this service has been granted to us with the general consent of our country (. . .) and we promise and publicly acknowledge that neither we nor our heirs shall demand or be able to demand or have such a service of keeping mercenaries from them or their heirs.¹⁸

The ability possessed by the inhabitants of this town to buy off their military obligations from 1327 would surely also encourage the use of mercenaries.¹⁹ Some towns of smaller size also had recourse to mercenaries as they could not defend themselves effectively. During the war of the succession of Brabant, the magistrate of Lierre declared that he had been forced to entrust the defence of the town to archers from England, Holland, Guelders, the bishopric of Utrecht and elsewhere, and to cannoneers.²⁰ This was also true of Nivelles²¹ and of Tirlemont,²² who called on mercenaries to guarantee their safety while looters ravaged the outskirts.

In Brabant, in the fourteenth century, mercenaries seem to have been an urban phenomenon.²³ The disappearance of the 'Brabançons' (late thirteenth century), the use of stipendiaries when the towns' militias were not yet sufficiently organised (early fourteenth century) and then the active participation of the latter at the end of the century are topics which it would be interesting to pursue further within the general study of urban growth in the duchy.

¹⁷ Des Marez, *L'organisation*, pp. 394 et seq.

¹⁸ 'Sunderlinge omme dien dienst, dien si ons nu hebben gewilcoert, omme sunderlinge gratie, niet van enegen rechte dat wi ocht onse vordren noit hadden ocht eisscen mochten, dat si soudiere selen houden met anderen onsen lieden van onsen lande, na ghelande dat hen daerof behoeren sal te geldene enen corten tijt, omme dorloge, dat wi nu hebben jegen onse vianden van Meghele, want ons dese dienst gewilcoert es met ghemeenren consente van onsen lande (. . .) Ende geloven ende bekennen openbare, dat wi noch onse oer vortane aldusdanegen dienst, van soudieren te houdene, van hen, noch van geboerten, en selen noch en mogen eisschen nog hebben' (BY, I, p. 713).

¹⁹ BY, I, pp. 773–6; Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1242–6, no LXXXIX; Van Uytven, *Stadsfinanciën*, p. 173.

²⁰ AGR, CB, 1.374–1.375.

²¹ Tarlier and Wauters, *La Belgique . . . Nivelles*, p. 42.

²² Wauters, *Géographie*, p. 45.

²³ By virtue of what I have written above, I do not consider the knights *de diversibus partibus* who came to the aid of John III in 1332 as mercenaries (DD, II, p. 572).

The artillery

The urban artillery

In the mid-fourteenth century, gunpowder artillery was a new and costly weapon.²⁴ Even so, it would spread rapidly through Brabant as the towns had the financial means to procure it. Divaeus affirmed that, according to the accounts of the town, Leuven possessed cannon from 1354²⁵ and thirty-two such were used at the battle of Santvliet (1356).²⁶ Molanus was of the same opinion as to the use of *triginta tres tonitruantes bombardas*.²⁷ Boonen provided the number of cannons and balls bought by Leuven during the war of the succession of Brabant.²⁸ I have been unable to find the sources used by these authors. They may have vanished in the interim. In any case, a few years later we know for sure that the town possessed artillery. After the rise to power of Peter Coutereel (1360), some *donderbussen* and *springalen* were placed on the ramparts.²⁹ In 1364, the magistrate decided to protect the gates of the wall with thirty artillerymen.³⁰ Let us note also that in 1363 or 1364, a certain Arnold of Leuven made and sold *donrebussen* in Ghent.³¹ Thus, from the 1360s onwards, the accounts of the town regularly mention expenses connected with artillery, clearly showing that this weapon was part of the standard arsenal of the city.

In Brussels, the situation is more confused. Zylbergeld dates the appearance of cannon there between 1356 and 1361.³² His argument is unfortunately based on numerous hypotheses and no archive provides confirmation. The oldest surviving document, which mentions artillery, dates only from 12 September 1378. At that time the *échevins*, receivers, counsellors and townspeople decided that the artillery pieces, their munitions and other objects intended for the defence of the town could never be lent, given or hired out to anyone, nor alienated in any fashion at all, under any pretext.³³ This act is rather curious. After all, who could borrow artillery from the town, except the duke? It is possible that the latter had already abused his privileges and that the town did not wish to find itself with its defences weakened again at a moment when Wenceslas was starting a new war against the land of Liège. This decision was also taken shortly before the end of the construction works on the second curtain wall (1379).³⁴ It is very likely that these two events were linked. This ordinance seems to have remained in force for a long time. In 1456, Philip the Good, as

²⁴ Henrard, 'L'artillerie en Belgique'; Gaier, *L'industrie*, pp. 92–3.

²⁵ Divaeus, *Jaerboeken*, p. 114.

²⁶ Divaeus, *Rerum Lovaniensium*, p. 102.

²⁷ Molanus, *Historiae*, II, p. 842.

²⁸ 87 *gemeijne donderbussen*, 36 *groote donderbussen* and 59,861 *clooten* (Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 229).

²⁹ AVL, 4.986 bis, f. 7 v., 280–281 v., 298 v.

³⁰ AVL, 4.988, f. 46 v., 47 v., 49 v.

³¹ Van Werveke, *Bijdragen*, p. 47.

³² Zylbergeld, 'L'artillerie', p. 617.

³³ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 58 v.; AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 48.

³⁴ Dickstein-Bernard, 'La construction', p. 116.

duke of Brabant and not as duke of Burgundy, demanded that Brussels take part in an expedition against the town of Deventer. They accepted, but did not send any piece of artillery, only their artillerymen (*donderbusmeesteren* and *colovermeesteren*).³⁵ Under 1388, Jean Wauquelin, in the translation of Edmond de Dynter, mentioned the *quenons et veugleres* used by the Bruxellois during the siege of Gaasbeek.³⁶ We should be careful, as it is in precisely this kind of detail that the translator is frequently guilty of anachronism. In any case, the town accounts for the month of May 1390 indicate the purchase of 130 small cannon (*cleyne donderbussen*) by the town.³⁷ The cause of this massive purchase is unknown to us. Zylbergeld suggests that Brussels wished to replace obsolete materiel³⁸ but I prefer another explanation. At that time, the duchies of Brabant and Guelders had not yet concluded a definitive peace. It may have been the fear of new military activity that led the town to strengthen its armament.

Artillery appeared in the two principal towns, Brussels and Leuven, during the 1360s. It is highly likely that many towns of lesser importance also acquired this new weapon at around the same period. Once the towns had acquired artillery pieces, a new official was responsible for their care, maintenance and use. In Malines, the master of cannons (*meester van den donderbussen*) first appears in 1356.³⁹ He commanded cannoneers and servants responsible for manufacturing black powder.⁴⁰ The powder was kept in leather sacks⁴¹ and held in safety in the fortifications.⁴² Pyrotechnic artillery did not immediately replace mechanical in the arsenals of the towns. During the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, weapons of both classes were used simultaneously in the defence of towns.⁴³ At this time, there was still no question of field artillery as there is no proof that artillery was in use during the battle of Santvliet. Cannons were principally intended to protect the city walls or fortresses. On occasion, they were moved and served to bombard the enemy ramparts. In either case, this was a static use of cannon.

We do not know why the towns of the Low Countries, particularly those of the duchy of Brabant, equipped themselves with artillery in the second half of the fourteenth century. According to Henrard, internal discord between the trades and the nobility, which was sometimes resolved to the benefit of the aristocracy as in Brussels, and sometimes to the benefit of the commons as in Leuven, kept the duchy in a continual state of alarm, and the conflict with

³⁵ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 188 v.

³⁶ DD, III, p. 623.

³⁷ Galesloot, 'Notes', p. 481.

³⁸ Zylbergeld, 'L'artillerie', p. 619.

³⁹ This was one Silbrecht or Siebrecht (Henrard, 'L'artillerie', pp. 160, 178).

⁴⁰ At least, this was the case in Malines during the years 1379–80 (Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 269).

⁴¹ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 273.

⁴² In Brussels, the gates of Sainte-Catherine and of Laken served as powder magazines from the start of the fifteenth century. Under Phillip the Good, a building in the *rue de l'Amigo*, near the town hall, fulfilled this function (Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 274; Henne and Wauters, *Histoire*, II, p. 44).

⁴³ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 172.

Flanders that had broken out at the dawn of the new reign hastened the arming of the cities.⁴⁴ This argument is not baseless but it is not the only factor to take into account. It is probably a consequence of the war of the succession of Brabant and of the programme of reinforcement of the urban fortifications. The towns also possessed the financial means, the productive capacity and the skilled artisans required to produce these weapons.

The ducal artillery

During the second half of the fourteenth century, there is rarely any mention of artillery pieces belonging to the dukes. In 1379, Joan bought several artillery pieces.⁴⁵ During the second war of Guelders, the duchess had cannons brought to 's Hertogenbosch from Vilvorde.⁴⁶ It is very likely that these pieces of artillery came from the ducal fortress. In 1385, Joan ordered a piece from John of Aa.⁴⁷ During the second war of Guelders, Thierry of Roover, *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch, bought at Ravenstein three *donrebussen*, saltpetre (*salpeters*) and sulphur (*swevels*), necessary ingredients for the making of black powder.⁴⁸ As these expenses were included in the accounts of a relevant ducal officer, these pieces were the property of the duchess. As all these purchases were very costly, the duchess preferred to borrow artillery pieces from the towns. In 1376, for example, Joan demanded of the town of Binche that they should send their artillery to Jodoigne.⁴⁹ When the town of Leuven rebelled in 1383, Malines sent some artillery pieces to Wenceslas. The duke made use of them, as the accounts of the town of Malines inform us of expenses for the repair of one of these cannons.⁵⁰ During the second war of Guelders, the duchess appealed to the goodwill of Leuven.⁵¹ It is not until the reign of Anthony that cannons appear in number in the ducal arsenal and in his fortresses.⁵² This did not prevent the duke from borrowing cannons during the largest military expeditions, especially during his expeditions in Luxemburg.⁵³ Thereafter the purchases of artillery pieces or ingredients necessary for the making of black powder were more and more frequent:

Delivery of 500 pounds of iron to the *donderbus maker* of the duke for making a bombard (1407)⁵⁴

Purchase of cannon at Antwerp (1408)⁵⁵

⁴⁴ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 161.

⁴⁵ Squilbeck, 'Le travail', p. 263.

⁴⁶ AGR, CC, 2.372, f. 118; CC, 2.373, f. 124.

⁴⁷ AGR, CC, 2.370, f. 136; CC, 2.372, f. 120.

⁴⁸ AGR, CR, 2.785–2.786.

⁴⁹ AGR, CB, 4.965.

⁵⁰ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', pp. 186, 291.

⁵¹ AVL, 5.002, f. 70.

⁵² De Raadt, 'L'inventaire du château ducal de Vilvorde'.

⁵³ In 1413, the towns of Treves and Maastricht loaned bombards to Anthony (DD, III, p. 227).

⁵⁴ AGR, CC, 2.394, f. 188 v.

⁵⁵ AGR, CC, 2.394, f. 407 v.

- Purchase of 71,000 pounds of iron to make a huge bombard (1409)⁵⁶
- Purchase of saltpetre and sulphur at Trier (1412)⁵⁷
- Purchase of saltpetre in Luxemburg (1412)⁵⁸
- Fabrication of stone cannonballs (1413)⁵⁹
- Purchase of iron at Virton to make cannon (1413)⁶⁰
- Fabrication of 1,736 cannonballs (1418)⁶¹
- Purchase of saltpetre at Antwerp (1419)⁶²

The growth of a ducal artillery park would not prevent Anthony from borrowing cannon when the need made itself felt. In 1412, the archbishop of Trier lent two great cannon. In 1413, the bombard *Nigra Margereta* was loaned to the count of Holland⁶³ and in the same year, the bishop of Liège entrusted the duke of Brabant with two cannons from the town of Huy so that they could form a battery at the siege of Elter.⁶⁴

This new weapon required the presence of specialists. The archives provide us with a few names. In 1380, the master of bombards to the duke of Brabant came to Trier to hear the report of a cannoneer regarding 'eim neue kunst' in the field of artillery.⁶⁵ Claus of Lit, artilleryman of the town of Ghent, came to advise the Brabançons in 1386.⁶⁶ These encounters should not be surprising. Artillery was a new weapon. It was vital to keep abreast of the latest technical developments and to exchange information with other specialists. From the time of Anthony, several names of masters of artillery (*donrebusmeisters*) are known.⁶⁷ Some of them were veritable masters of their art. In 1409, Anthony ordered Pasquier den Kick to construct a bombard that would be one of the largest in the Middle Ages. The work took a little more than two years, and 71,000 kilos of iron and more than 4,000 kilos of charcoal were needed in its fabrication.⁶⁸ Certain secondary tasks also required the participation of professionals. In 1418, Henric Andries, mason, reshaped 61 old stone cannonballs in preparation for the siege of Dordrecht.⁶⁹ In December 1420, at the castle of Vilvorde, Henry Heubelins (or Oebbeyns), sworn master mason to the duke,

⁵⁶ Asaert, 'Quinten', pp. 249–52.

⁵⁷ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Raimbauts', p. 11.

⁵⁸ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Raimbauts', p. 11.

⁵⁹ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Schoenvorst', p. 41.

⁶⁰ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Schoenvorst', p. 41.

⁶¹ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 93 r.–v.

⁶² AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 90 v.

⁶³ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Raimbauts', p. 23.

⁶⁴ Quicke, 'L'intérêt', p. 459; Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Schoenvorst', p. 41.

⁶⁵ Gaier, *L'industrie*, p. 235.

⁶⁶ De Pauw, 'Claus'.

⁶⁷ Including Pasquier den Kick (1411–14), Ghijs Hoifflager (1419) and William Hoeverdye (1421–22) (AGR, CC, 2.396 f. 246; CC, 2.397 f. 317 v.; CC, 2.401, f. 240; CC, 2.404, f. 76 v.). Chevalier-de Gottal thinks that these were suppliers to the court. I do not believe it was the case, as in 1410 Pasquier den Kick was actively engaged with the ducal artillery during his last expedition in France (AGR, CC, 11, f. 14; Chevalier-De Gottal, *Les fêtes*, p. 42).

⁶⁸ Gaier, *L'industrie*, pp. 262–3; Asaert, 'Quinten', pp. 249–52.

⁶⁹ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 93 v.

oversaw the making of three hundred cannonballs.⁷⁰ The preparation of black powder must surely also have been the responsibility of someone possessing some elementary knowledge of chemistry.

The specialists

Specialists in intelligence: spies and scouts

When the army set out on campaign, alongside the combatants we also find a whole series of individuals charged with accomplishing specific tasks, sometimes requiring a particular skill. I shall call them the specialists and will group them according to their functions within the army.

Intelligence has always played an important, even a crucial role in the outcome of a military conflict. This was true also of the Middle Ages. Knowing the position of the enemy army, the size of their forces or the plans of their commanders provided an immense advantage. Much information might have been obtained from merchants, churchmen, diplomats and messengers but it was not enough. The *justiciers* were charged with organising and managing an intelligence service. In 1369, Roover of Vederacken, *écoutète* of Maasland, paid *enen vrient tot Nymeghen gheseten die Roveren verbodighen pleecht te doen*.⁷¹ Other agents stationed in Guelders and the land of Cleves worked for him.⁷² The duchy of Guelders was the worst enemy of Brabant in the late fourteenth century. It is thus not by chance that several spies in the pay of Brabant and in contact with the *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch were active there.⁷³ Besides these permanent agents, the *justiciers* sometimes sent one of his men to gather information. On 11 April 1369, the *écoutète* of Maasland warned that enemies were gathering at Moendijk, dispatched an agent there, *om 't ghestant daer af te weten*.⁷⁴

The enemies of Brabant also had trusted men to inform them. Unsurprisingly, the spies of Guelders were particularly active. In 1386, William I knew of the actions of Arnold of Hoemen. This allowed the duke of Guelders to set an ambush and capture him.⁷⁵ In 1388, during the second siege of Grave, the Brabançon leaders organised a *consilium secretum*.⁷⁶ This precaution clearly shows that they were wary of indiscreet listeners. This did not prevent the duke of Guelders being informed, *par espies ou autres gens*, of the Brabançon plans.⁷⁷ In 1398, William I sent a spy to Liège, whose mission was to learn about the negotiations and the alliances between the duchy of Brabant and the principality of Liège.⁷⁸ In 1369, we can observe an exemplary case. At this time, the

⁷⁰ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 93 v.; CC, 4.755/I, f. 67 r.; Nauwelaers, *Histoire*, I, p. 774.

⁷¹ AGR, CR, 2.779.

⁷² AGR, CR, 2.779.

⁷³ AGR, CR, 2.781, 2.794 or 2.805.

⁷⁴ AGR, CR, 2.779.

⁷⁵ DD, III, p. 112.

⁷⁶ DD, III, p. 124.

⁷⁷ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 166, 170–1; DD, III, p. 124.

⁷⁸ D'Outremeuse, *Geste*, p. 699.

English did not like the Francophile attitude of Wenceslas. They feared that the duke might take the side of the king of France and support him militarily. To counteract this threat, Thomas Beauchamp, captain of Calais, ordered John of Saint-Amand, canon of Cambrai, to investigate the forces, the itineraries and the possible means to oppose the troops of Brabant. For a sum of 20,000 *francs*, he also undertook to find means to eliminate physically the duke.⁷⁹

The scouts (*exploratores, cursores, coureur, chevaucheur, descouvreur*), in an age in which military cartography did not exist, were the basis of the whole system of information for the army on campaign.⁸⁰ While passing through hostile territory, they rode at the head of the army and on its flanks. They guided the troops, chose the best roads and searched for passes, bridges and fords. In this, they did not hesitate to call on the local population.⁸¹ They were also responsible for finding a suitable place to make camp, locating sources of water, etc. As they were often the first to make contact with the enemy, they could also furnish valuable information about them.⁸² Finally, when the army was on the march, they provided an extended protection, that is they could discover traps or ambushes laid by the enemy.⁸³ They did the same in friendly territory. They were also charged with the protection of endangered areas, in which they made patrols. In 1397, informed by *certos nuncios et exploratores* of the surprise attack planned by the duke of Guelders at Eindhoven, the Brabançon captains dispatched thither John, count of Megen and Hoop, at the time *écoutète* of 's Hertogenbosch, and three hundred *lances* to protect the town.⁸⁴ The scouts were nonetheless genuine combatants. During their missions, if their orders allowed it, they pillaged and took prisoners like any other man-at-arms.⁸⁵ It is impossible to estimate the proportion of scouts in the medieval army. Their number was surely very variable according to the circumstances on the march. Gaier thinks that these men were chosen at need from among the troops.⁸⁶ This is possible. It may also be that certain soldiers specialised in this type of mission and were equipped for it, adopting a lighter armament and using faster and stronger horses. Others may even have possessed particular knowledge concerning geography or path finding.

Those responsible for communications: messengers and musicians

Messengers were the key figure in the transmission of orders and the circulation of news. Whether the message to be transmitted was verbal or written, speed of delivery was of fundamental importance. For this reason, it was usual to employ professionals.⁸⁷ According to Contamine, a well-organised messenger service,

⁷⁹ Quicke, 'Jean de Saint-Amand, chanoine de Cambrai, chapelain du pape'.

⁸⁰ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 168; Verbruggen, 'Un plan', p. 444.

⁸¹ AGR, CC, 13.300, f. 37 v.

⁸² DD, III, p. 112; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 21, 172.

⁸³ Gaier, *Art*, p. 109.

⁸⁴ DD, III, p. 130; De Stavelot, *Chronique*, p. 99.

⁸⁵ *Chronique du bon duc Loys*, p. 206.

⁸⁶ Gaier, *Art*, p. 126.

⁸⁷ Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 185–6.

that is, one possessing relays, changes of horse and so on, could carry information over distances between 150 and 200 kilometres per day.⁸⁸ I do not know if such an organisation functioned in Brabant, but information spread swiftly and well in the army. For example, after the defeat at Baesweiler, the duchess was immediately informed of the misfortune⁸⁹ and during the first siege of Grave, Joan stayed at 's Hertogenbosch where she was daily informed of the evolution of the situation.⁹⁰ The messengers did not work exclusively for the benefit of their lord. It was already habitual at the time to exchange news concerning the most important political events with neighbouring rulers. Examples are plentiful. Around the feast of Saint-Jean 1368, a messenger from Brabant was sent to Liège to announce peace in France.⁹¹ Just after Baesweiler, Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault and Holland, sent one of his men to Brussels to learn the circumstances of the defeat.⁹² On 30 August 1380, Louis of Male sent a messenger to Joan and Wenceslas to inform them of his victory over the rebel towns.⁹³ John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, wrote a long letter to Anthony, his brother, to tell him of the events of the battle of Othée (1408).⁹⁴ It is superfluous to note that all these exchanges of information took place among allied or friendly rulers and there was no question of sharing anything with enemies.

In the heat of combat, it is impossible for messengers to transmit orders and information rapidly to a large number of combatants. Hence, the musicians make their appearance. When I speak of musicians, I simply mean someone equipped with an instrument, not some virtuoso employed to entertain the troops. At Worringen, the trumpet (*bosinen*) was used to signal that the food was ready and that it was time to eat,⁹⁵ to sound the alarm or to send simple commands.⁹⁶ In 1334, the duke used them to gather his men;⁹⁷ at dawn, it was again at its sound that the men-at-arms were ordered into battle and their banners rose.⁹⁸ In 1340, at the siege of Tournai, the presence of pipers (*piper*) is known to us since one of them was accused of spying by the Flemish.⁹⁹ In 1398, the instrument (*tuba*) was once again used to inform the army that the assault was called off.¹⁰⁰ In the contingents of the urban militias, who had their own organisation, musicians were also present. The Brussels militia were accompanied by two trumpeters (*trompeneren*) and two pipers (*pypeneren*).¹⁰¹ In

⁸⁸ Contamine, *La vie*, p. 66.

⁸⁹ The bad news reached the capital next day (AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 64).

⁹⁰ AGR, CC, 2.373; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 163.

⁹¹ De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 232.

⁹² Lacroix, 'Extraits', p. 410.

⁹³ De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 264.

⁹⁴ Fairon, *Regestes*, III, pp. 106–9.

⁹⁵ VH, p. 323.

⁹⁶ VH, pp. 165, 167.

⁹⁷ BY, I, pp. 537, 542.

⁹⁸ DD, II, pp. 568, 570.

⁹⁹ Des Marez, 'Un document', pp. 307–10.

¹⁰⁰ DD, III, p. 139.

¹⁰¹ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 104–8; Favresse, 'Documents', pp. 118–30.

this case, they may have been genuine musicians who set the pace of the march by their music. Music had still another role to play. During close combat, the sound of instruments served to raise the spirits of the troops. At Worringen, the trumpets ceased once the duke's banner had fallen, but the music restarted when it was raised again.¹⁰²

Those responsible for food: foragers and cooks

The foragers are all the men charged with gathering victuals and forage for the army.¹⁰³ This task was carried out mostly in enemy territory, as in friendly or allied lands supplies could be arranged in an easier way and, at least in theory, there was no need to live off the land. In Brabant, the foragers were sometimes chosen from among the commoners. Clearly, after the massacre of many such at Sambeek (1388), the urban militias were very discontented.¹⁰⁴ They would surely not have reacted thus if they had been dealing with knights. In another chronicle, they are described as *vulgares*. Again, the author would not have chosen such a word to describe members of the nobility.¹⁰⁵ The foragers moved on horseback or on foot depending on their mission.¹⁰⁶ Their safety posed a real problem, as they are not able to defend themselves. For this reason, they were usually accompanied by an escort. This was not a superfluous precaution, since in 1340, a troop of Hennuyers and Brabançons attacked *ceulx qui gardoient les fourrageurs*¹⁰⁷ while in 1388, the Gueldrois massacred a whole group of Brabançon foragers because they left the camp without an escort.¹⁰⁸

The feeding of an army requires not only the provision of victuals to the combatants, but also the preparation of the food. For this reason, cooks accompanied the army. One of the earliest accounts of their activity dates from the war of the succession of Limburg when John I besieged the castle of Fauquemont. As peace was made before the fall of the place, the duke raised the siege and retired with his men. The cooks, through negligence, left on the field a great bronze cauldron, which was carried into the fortress.¹⁰⁹ Later, in 1329, John III recaptured the cauldron when he took the stronghold.¹¹⁰ Information on this subject is unfortunately too rare and too brief. By way of an anecdote, here is another episode. When the seneschal hoped to re seize Grave so as to use it as a bridgehead against the duchy of Guelders, he sent thither his cook and his valets (*cocos et famulos*) so that they could prepare food in expectation of his arrival with his men-at-arms.¹¹¹

¹⁰² VH, pp. 211–14.

¹⁰³ DD, III, p. 124; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 260; *Historia Gelriae*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁴ DD, III, p. 124.

¹⁰⁵ *Anonymi, sed veteris*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁶ DD, III, p. 124.

¹⁰⁷ William of Pypempoys from Brussels lost his life during the fight (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 200–1).

¹⁰⁸ DD, III, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹ DD, II, p. 442.

¹¹⁰ DD, II, p. 551.

¹¹¹ DD, III, p. 110.

Medical services: doctors, surgeons and farriers

The narrative sources sometimes mention those injured in battle. In this case, they describe in detail the causes of the wounds, but they make no reference to the care given to the unfortunate combatants. This is curious, as we know that doctors and surgeons accompanied the armies and were often present on the battlefields. For example, at Baesweiler, among the troops of the *huusgesinde*, we find the duke's surgeon¹¹² and during the second war of Guelders, Joan sent a *chyirurgijn* from Leuven to Outre-Meuse.¹¹³ An ordinance of 1339 describes in detail the organisation of the militia contingent of Brussels. There is no mention of a doctor. The town was not however completely unconcerned by the health of its citizens, as in the fifteenth century a doctor and a surgeon were paid for their service.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, we do not know if they took any part in military expeditions.

Among the members of the army at Baesweiler, there are three individuals – Peter Druart, farrier of Marbaix (*de marscalc van Marbays*), John Sollenberg and John of Thynes – whose seals represent hammers, horseshoes and harness. These were no doubt farriers.¹¹⁵ We should not be surprised by the presence of such people. In this *chevauchée*, more than 2,000 horses were on the march towards the duchy of Jülich. All these animals needed the attention and care that the farriers provided. Let us not forget that at this time the marshal-farriers also played the important role of veterinary surgeon. We can assume, although the documents make no mention thereof, that they were present in most of the ducal expeditions involving a large number of men, and hence a large number of horses.

Technicians: engineers, artisans, workers and miners

Before the appearance of gunpowder artillery, the besiegers used mechanical war machines such as *ballistae*, mangonels and trebuchets. As the means of transport at the time were rudimentary, these deadly engines were often assembled or even built on the spot. For example, in 1388, the Brabançons in sight of Grave constructed a *magnum ingenium* called *arietes*¹¹⁶ intended to shatter the gates and the walls of the town.¹¹⁷ For this specialised work, engineers were called for. During the first siege of Fauquemont (1326), John III placed his artisans under the orders of a most highly reputed engineer.¹¹⁸ Few of these individuals are known to us. At the end of the thirteenth century, a certain *Johanni Pluckemese* was responsible for a *balista*¹¹⁹ and among the combatants in the *chevauchée* of Jülich we find Peter of Aken, *die blimeister*.¹²⁰ These engineers were probably also responsible for large-scale works during military operations

¹¹² De Raadt, 'La bataille', 12, p. 241.

¹¹³ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 121.

¹¹⁴ Dickstein-Bernard, 'Le médecin et le chirurgien aux gages de la ville de Bruxelles'.

¹¹⁵ AGR, CB, 3.545, 4.354, 4.410.

¹¹⁶ A kind of battering-ram.

¹¹⁷ DD, III, pp. 123, 124.

¹¹⁸ Procurator, *Willelmi*, pp. 151, 201–2; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 68–9.

¹¹⁹ AGR, CR, 2.602.

¹²⁰ AGR, CB, 3.192.

such as the diversion of the waters of the Geule and the flooding of the village of Fauquemont in 1326¹²¹ or the construction of a bridge over the Meuse in 1388.¹²² The effort with which the Gueldrois destroyed the work reflects the ability of the engineers and the efficiency of the workmen of Brabant. It is important to mention that the *maîtres des engins* and specialised artisans in the service of the town were sometimes requisitioned by the duke during private expeditions, although the city did not have to send its militia to help the ruler.¹²³

During a siege, it was sometimes necessary to use engineers capable of sapping and mining the enemy walls. In 1329, we find some *fosseurs* and *mureurs* in the army of John III when he was on his way to besiege the castle of Fauquemont, *car sans ceux ne alla-t-il point*.¹²⁴ In Malines, and possibly in some towns of Brabant, the pioneers were called *ribauds* and obeyed a captain with the title 'King of the *ribauds*' (*koninck der ribauden*).¹²⁵ In the fourteenth century, the Liégeois, who were already mining for coal, were specialists in this kind of operation. Many powerful lords called on their services.¹²⁶ In 1346, they took part in the fall of the castle of Arkenteel.¹²⁷ The dukes regularly had recourse to these specialists. The *hoilleurs de Liège* were present at the siege of Reifferscheid (1385).¹²⁸ They played a vital role in the fall of the fortress of Gaasbeek (1388).¹²⁹ That same year, the king of France called on their services for his expedition against the duke of Guelders (1388).¹³⁰ Finally, in March 1412, Anthony used them to sap the castle of Elter.¹³¹

The sailors

Brabant was not a coastal principality. Antwerp was nonetheless a very important port, and the northwestern part of the duchy, around Bergen-op-Zoom, was neighbour to Zeeland. The duchy was also bordered by the Scheldt and the Meuse, two great and much navigated rivers. War at sea or at least on the rivers had therefore not to be excluded from military operations. Nonetheless, for two obvious reasons, the duke obviously did not possess a war fleet. Not only were these operations rare, but also the making of military craft was expensive and involved a long delay. When necessary, the duke was content to requisition civilian vessels and to call on the professionals at his disposal. In 1303, when the Brabançons were besieging Malines, boats supplied the city with victuals bought in Flanders. John II demanded that the sailors of Antwerp destroy the

¹²¹ BY, I, pp. 472–9.

¹²² DD, III, p. 124.

¹²³ This was the case in 1329, during the siege of Fauquemont (DD, II, pp. 550–1).

¹²⁴ DD, II, pp. 550–1, 784–5.

¹²⁵ Henrard, 'L'artillerie', p. 140. These *ribauds* should not be confused with the foot soldiers found in the French armies of the same era.

¹²⁶ Gaier, 'Aux origines de l'industrie houillère liégeoise'.

¹²⁷ DD, II, pp. 643–4.

¹²⁸ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–2; De Rivo, *Gesta*, p. 62; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, pp. 398–9; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 327–8.

¹²⁹ DD, III, p. 122.

¹³⁰ D'Outremeuse, *Geste*, p. 707; Kervyn De Lettenhove, *Istore*, II, p. 395.

¹³¹ Van Werveke, 'Auszug . . . Raimbauts', p. 23.

enemy fleet.¹³² In 1340, to protect commerce and shipping crossing the Channel, Edward III promised to equip a war fleet, two-thirds of the combatants in which should be Flemish and Brabançon.¹³³ These should not be confused with marines. According to the custom of the time, these would be men-at-arms embarked for the duration of operations and not specialists equipped and trained to fight at sea. The Scheldt played an important role during the war of the succession of Brabant. From the start of the conflict, the sailors from Antwerp took control of the river and blocked it in the direction of Malines.¹³⁴ On 6 August 1356, they allowed their militia to cross and to attack the land of Waes.¹³⁵ At the end of the month, the Flemish counter-attacked. They organised a maritime blockade of Antwerp and disembarked troops to lay siege to the Brabançon port and city.¹³⁶ During the first siege of Grave, situated by the Meuse, Paul of Haastrecht, *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch, hired or had built several ships to assist the military operations.¹³⁷ We should not dwell overmuch on these examples. The geographical situation of the duchy was such that marine warfare was a marginal phenomenon. It is however probably, although the sources do not speak of it, that some supplies would have been carried on the rivers, as was the case for Namur and Liège.¹³⁸

The participation of churchmen in wartime

Introduction

From the eighth century onwards, the clergy were no longer permitted to bear arms. At the council of Estines (744), it was decided that clergymen could no longer accompany armies, except those who were chosen to celebrate Mass, to hear confession and to carry relics. This prohibition would have to be frequently renewed, as in the thirteenth century some churchmen still took an active part in military expeditions. Suffice it to recall the conduct of Siffroid, archbishop of Cologne, at the battle of Worringen.¹³⁹ These cases became rarer and rarer in the fourteenth century, except of course in the principality of Liège, where the bishop himself exercised the command of the army.¹⁴⁰ We have not encountered any churchman under arms during the second half of the fourteenth century. At most, we could single out Nicolas of Septfontaines, sacristan of the cathedral of Cologne, and his companions who served Wenceslas and Joan during the war of the succession of Brabant¹⁴¹ and Otto of Nassau, canon of Cologne, who was

¹³² Wauters, 'Jean II', col. 227.

¹³³ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 363.

¹³⁴ DD, III, p. 25.

¹³⁵ *Breve chronicon*, p. 28.

¹³⁶ Goovaerts, 'La flotte de Louis de Male'.

¹³⁷ AGR, CR, 2.783.

¹³⁸ Balon, 'L'organisation', p. 23; Gaier, *Art*, pp. 52, 101–2.

¹³⁹ VH, pp. XLVIII–XLIX.

¹⁴⁰ Gaier, *Art*, pp. 195–7.

¹⁴¹ AGR, CB, 967.

part of the expedition in Jülich.¹⁴² This does not mean however that the religious played no role in wartime. They were active and their participation, contrary to what one might expect, was not only spiritual but also material, diplomatic and moral.

Spiritual participation

It was always considered that God decided the outcome of trials of arms. The death of Lambert, count of Leuven, at the battle of Florennes (1015), was not accidental but *ex Dei voluntate*.¹⁴³ The first task of the men of the church was thus to intercede before Him to obtain His good graces and thus bring victory to their camp. There are many examples. In 1363, the magistrate of Leuven distributed alms to the cloisters of the town, which by their prayers would bring about good results from the negotiations with Wenceslas.¹⁴⁴ In 1371, while her husband was leading the army of Brabant towards the town of Jülich, Joan had prayers said for the success of the expedition.¹⁴⁵ For the same reason, at Leuven, a procession *vore dorloge* was organised in August of the same year.¹⁴⁶ In April 1388, during the siege of Gaasbeek, the *Cromme Cruys*, a sacred object, was paraded across Leuven by the townsfolk who hoped thus to bring about the surrender of the fortress.¹⁴⁷ This does not mean that churchmen remained to the rear. They accompanied the army on campaign as well and inflamed the faith of the combatants.¹⁴⁸ They said Masses, heard confessions and blessed the troops before battle.¹⁴⁹ It is said that at Baesweiler, the enemy appeared while the Brabançons were hearing the office.¹⁵⁰ Paradoxically, nor did the clergy forget to preach to the combatants that, even in the defence of a just cause, to kill was no less a sin.¹⁵¹ After the battle, they dealt with the mortal remains of those unfortunates who had fallen in combat. At Worringen, the brothers of various orders carried the bodies and buried them. This heavy task lasted until evening of the next day.¹⁵² Later, religious services were organised for the repose of the souls of the slain men-at-arms. This was the case in October 1415, after the defeat at Agincourt. When the body of Anthony arrived at La Bassée, the poor were gratified with alms and a religious service and a wake were then celebrated in honour of the duke and his comrades, executed by the English. The next day, the sad cortège arrived at Baisieux where the same funerary pomp was repeated.¹⁵³ At the end of the war, offices were once again celebrated in hopes of the swift return of a person missing or captive. After Baesweiler, Joan had a

¹⁴² AGR, CB, 2.920.

¹⁴³ *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, pp. 469–70.

¹⁴⁴ AVL, 4.986 bis, f. 350.

¹⁴⁵ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 65.

¹⁴⁶ AVL, 4.995, f. 24 v.

¹⁴⁷ Wauters, *Histoire*, I, p. 144.

¹⁴⁸ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 58–61.

¹⁴⁹ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 58–9.

¹⁵⁰ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22.

¹⁵¹ VH, pp. 161, 165.

¹⁵² Wauters, *Le duc*, p. 175.

¹⁵³ Chevalier-De Gottal, *Les fêtes*, p. 135.

daily mass celebrated to hasten the deliverance of her husband.¹⁵⁴ The rulers were grateful and gave suitable thanks for the goodness of God.¹⁵⁵ In 1290, John I instituted the chapel of the Three Kings in the church of Sainte-Gudule, in Brussels, in memory of the victory at Worringen.¹⁵⁶

It seems that all these prayers were not without effect. At the end of the twelfth century, when Baldwin V, count of Hainault, attacked Brabant, he failed to capture Nivelles because his troops were suddenly seized by an inexplicable terror.¹⁵⁷ During the great coalition against Brabant (1332–34), when the duchy was surrounded by enemies, the Brabançons had great difficulties in obtaining the food they needed as the country was under blockade. At the same time, as if by a miracle, their adversaries were unable to catch the smallest of herrings at sea. The embargo once lifted, the Flemish fishermen caught them in great numbers.¹⁵⁸ Later, during the first siege of Maastricht by the Liégeois (1407), the town was saved by the exceptional rigours of winter. Bitter frosts began on 13 November and lasted for one hundred and ten days. For the besieged, this was a miracle of Saint-Servais, one of the three Saints of ice. Elsewhere, it had been predicted that the people of Maastricht would be victors in ten times ten days.¹⁵⁹ I leave to the reader the task of interpreting these various episodes.

Material participation

The prelates took part in certain meetings of the Estates, voted for aids and contributed their share.¹⁶⁰ This financial participation was imposed on them lately. Only after a long struggle between the authorities of the Church and the duke did the religious establishments agree to pay their share in extraordinary aids. The bitterest crisis took place in 1374, when in defiance of all their rights and privileges the abbeys were taxed by the nobles and the towns. A compromise was finally reached.¹⁶¹ The abbeys were also required to provide a large number of wagons. In the second half of the fourteenth century, this obligation was nearly 1,600 carting services a year. In wartime they were used mostly for transporting military equipment.

The churchmen in negotiations

Because of their particular status, the ecclesiastical authorities were often called on to negotiate or arbitrate in a quarrel. The Pope, the leader of the Church, was most apt to intercede in favour of one or another, but in the fourteenth century his prestige was low and his requests had little effect.¹⁶² In 1356, from the start

¹⁵⁴ AGR, CC, 17.144.

¹⁵⁵ VH, p. 321.

¹⁵⁶ VH, pp. 519–20.

¹⁵⁷ Wauters, 'Henri I', col. 109.

¹⁵⁸ DD, II, p. 572.

¹⁵⁹ Schaepkens, 'Les sièges', pp. 415–16, 420–1.

¹⁶⁰ Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, pp. 213–15; Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 435–8; Lousse, 'De Staten van Brabant . . . Contributie en Convocatie van de Prelaten'; Lousse, 'De Staten van Brabant . . . De Prelaten'.

¹⁶¹ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, I, pp. 238 et seq.

¹⁶² VH, pp. 498–500, 514.

of the tension between the count of Flanders and the duke of Brabant, Innocent VI intervened. He charged the bishop of Cambrai to keep the peace between the two princes and he wrote to Wenceslas (6 June), to Louis of Male (6 June), to Charles IV (9 June) and to other powerful lords so as to prevent any conflict.¹⁶³ The Pope continued to intervene regularly during the war of the succession of Brabant,¹⁶⁴ but this had no effect on the progress of military operations and we could claim that the actions of the supreme pontiff had none but a moral effect.¹⁶⁵ On 1 January 1358, the Pope absolved Louis of Male of the sins committed in Brabant during the late war.¹⁶⁶ Of course, churchmen of a lesser rank were also called on. They were sometimes charged with carrying declarations of war. This was the case for the abbots of Floreffe and Gembloux who, in 1297, announced to Philip the Fair that Guy of Dampierre declared himself free of all obligations to the king of France and that he had allied himself to the king of England.¹⁶⁷ Usually they dealt with more peaceful missions. Just before the battle of Worringen, some Teutonic Knights tried vainly to reconcile the opposing parties.¹⁶⁸ After the battle of Baesweiler, Joan sent a Dominican to gather information about the conditions for ransom of the imprisoned duke.¹⁶⁹ As she wished to hasten the liberation of her husband, the duchess gave 16,000 *écus* to the bishop of Liège for his intervention with the duke of Jülich in favour of Wenceslas.¹⁷⁰ In 1374, it was again the bishop of Liège who came to re-establish concord between the duke and the Estates.¹⁷¹

Of course, as far as the bishop of Liège is concerned, it is always difficult to determine if he was acting as a man of the church or as a territorial ruler. When the ecclesiastical authorities were unable to enforce their desires or when someone dared to defy them, spiritual sanctions such as interdict or excommunication were still available to them. Thus, Siffroid, archbishop of Cologne, excommunicated John I before the battle of Worringen¹⁷² and Adolf (II) of La Mark, bishop of Liège, pronounced an interdict in 1332 against Brabant following the attacks by John III against the townspeople of Saint-Trond.¹⁷³ Of course, the duke did not remain entirely passive, even in the purely spiritual domain. Let us recall the attempt by John III to create a new diocese for the duchies of Brabant and of Limburg. Until then, the domains of the dukes marched with the dioceses of Cambrai and of Liège. We can be sure that in this

¹⁶³ Despy, 'Les interventions', pp. 91–5; Sauerland, *Urkunden*, IV, p. 127.

¹⁶⁴ On 3 and 31 August, 19 October 1356, 5 March and 20 April 1357 (Despy, 'Les interventions', pp. 95–109; Sauerland, *Urkunden*, IV, pp. 129–30, 139–40, 147, 149).

¹⁶⁵ Despy, 'Les interventions', pp. 74–80.

¹⁶⁶ ADN, B. 269.

¹⁶⁷ Funck-Brentano, *Philippe*, pp. 201–4.

¹⁶⁸ VH, pp. 176–7, 401, 428, 470–1.

¹⁶⁹ De Ram, 'Particularités', p. 243.

¹⁷⁰ D'Outremeuse, *Chronique*, pp. 195–6; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 298; De Lewis, *Chronicon*, p. 125.

¹⁷¹ BY, II, p. 239; DD, III, p. 78; Daris, *Histoire . . . XIII^e et XIV^e*, pp. 613–14.

¹⁷² VH, p. 163.

¹⁷³ Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 123.

matter, John III acted not so much for the good of the churches as to diminish the influence of the bishop of Liège over his lands and his subjects. This project, naturally, came to nothing. It is nonetheless intriguing to see a secular ruler attack directly the spiritual power of the bishop.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Fairon, 'Un projet de démembrement du diocèse de Liège'; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 130–1.

Part Four

THE ORGANISATION

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General Organisation of the Army

Revenues of the duke of Brabant

Although defeat was often synonymous with financial catastrophe, victory usually allowed a ruler to recover his expenses. Unfortunately this was not always the case. In 1329, while John III had indeed succeeded in subduing Renaud, lord of Fauquemont, rumour had it that the long siege of the robber baron's fortress had cost the duke the equivalent of four times the value of the seigniory.¹ I have deliberately glossed over the financial aspects of warfare. The subject is worthy of a detailed treatment, which cannot be undertaken within the scope of this work. It seems useful, even so, to describe briefly the financial means available to the prince to carry on his belligerent projects. To simplify a complex situation, it can be said that the duke, like the other territorial princes of the era, drew his revenues, in coin and in kind, principally from two sources: his domains, and the aids.²

As landlord, the duke imposed on his domains a whole series of very varied taxes, which made up the greater part of his revenues.³ Here I am thinking of the income of the local or particular receivers, the income of the officers of justice, the income from timber, the income of the Household, the income of the Mint, the revenues obtained from the Lombards, from the moneychangers, and from the Jews, the town taxes and his life annuity over the town of Leuven.⁴

As lord and sovereign, the duke could demand feudal aids from his vassals. While custom had made these feudal aids practically obligatory, it had also fixed their occasions. Usually the number of reserved cases was limited to four, but this could vary from region to region. In the charters of Brabant, we encounter between two and five cases, depending on the time and the place. Generally, there were three: imprisonment or ransom (*gevangenissen*), marriage (*huweleke*) and knighthood or dubbing (*ridderscape*). We meet these in the charter of

¹ DD, II, p. 547.

² Uyttebrouck, 'Considérations', pp. 7–8; Uyttebrouck, 'Les juridictions', pp. 130 et seq.

³ Martens, *Actes relatifs à l'administration des revenus domaniaux*; Martens, *L'administration du domaine ducal*.

⁴ Martens, *L'administration*, pp. 137–62, 292–308.

Cortenbergh (1312)⁵ as well as in various acts during the reign of Joan and Wenceslas (1362,⁶ 1369,⁷ 1370⁸ or 1386⁹).

The duke, by increasing the territory under his authority without increasing his own domains, was led into greater expense. The revenues of his domain would no longer suffice for his needs, and he had no right to levy an additional feudal aid. It is thus that the extraordinary aids make their appearance.¹⁰ If the motive for which the duke wished to raise an aid was not included in the reserved cases, it would be an extraordinary aid. That is, it was not recognised in law and, in consequence, was purely voluntary, subject to the consent of those taxed, or rather the consent of their representatives. It was granted in goodwill by the Estates. For this reason, clauses of non-prejudice appear in the acts concerning the granting of an extraordinary aid. At the end of the fourteenth century, this practice was already well established. During the war of the succession of Limburg, John I taxed all the inhabitants, with the exception of the *chevaliers, escuiers et gens estrains de lignage de chevaliers*, of 1/20th of the value of their possessions to pay the expenses that the war entailed.¹¹ Between 1356 and 1430, eighteen extraordinary aids were granted by the Estates to the dukes. More than half of these, ten out of seventeen, were linked directly to the consequences of warfare, such as payment of men-at-arms, reimbursement of losses or payment of ransoms.¹² The Estates rarely refused to vote for an extraordinary aid when the duchy was in danger, and it was thanks to this voluntary submission by the country that the duke had sufficient means to finance his military operations.

Unfortunately for the duke, the revenues of his domains and the money procured by aids were not sufficient to finance an expedition on a large scale or to prosecute a war for a long period of time. In this case, the ruler had to resort to other means to obtain the necessary funds. He could have recourse to an exceptional tax, if it were granted by the Estates,¹³ to pledge his own jewellery,¹⁴ to borrowing from the towns, from the most powerful lords or the richest merchants, to the issuing of annuities,¹⁵ to manipulating the coinage,¹⁶ etc. We have a good example of all these means in 1424 when John IV decided to fight Humphrey of Gloucester.¹⁷ At worst, the duke could embark on the dangerous

⁵ Van Der Straeten, *Het charter*, I, p. 38; II, p. 13.

⁶ AVL, 1.311, BY, II, p. 593; *Den luyster*, I, pp. 137–8.

⁷ Wauters, *Environs*, I, p. 454.

⁸ BY, II, p. 619.

⁹ Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 156–7; Favresse, 'Documents', pp. 147–9.

¹⁰ Cuvelier, 'Le fouage brabançon de 1374'; Moureaux-Van Neck, 'Un aspect de l'histoire financière du Brabant au moyen-âge'.

¹¹ VH, pp. LI–LII; Van Uytven, 'Standenprivileges en -beden in Brabant'.

¹² Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 531–4.

¹³ This was for example the case of the *Glaviegelt* in 1388.

¹⁴ As in 1356, just before the war of the succession of Brabant (AGR, Mss div., 383, f. 115–17).

¹⁵ Bigwood, *Le régime juridique et économique du commerce de l'argent*.

¹⁶ Laurent, *La loi de Gresham au moyen âge*; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 402–33.

¹⁷ Thielemans, 'Un emprunt brabançon sur la place de Bruges en 1425'.

policy of mortgaging his own lands, which often simply had the result of injuring the territorial integrity of the duchy. The duke also benefited from a series of *corvées*. While their provision did not bring in any money for the ruler, he was at least spared from expending any. In this way, a large proportion of the carriage for the army could be gathered, works of fortification of the maintenance of defences could be organised, a portion of the supplies could be obtained, etc. For the duke, war was a highly risky activity, as a large proportion of the duchy's revenues might be engaged in it. In case of a reverse, as at Baesweiler, the whole economy of the duchy would find itself compromised. After 1371, as already pointed out, Wenceslas' debts were so severe that warfare became too expensive for the duke.

Declaration of war and mobilisation

Letters of defiance

In the Middle Ages, it was, in theory, forbidden to attack an enemy by stealth. This had such great importance that in certain alliances, the procedure to be followed if the agreement were to break down was clearly specified. Sometimes, one month's advance warning was required to inform the new adversary of one's bellicose intentions.¹⁸ This well reflects the notions of honour of the era. Thus we see the governor of Limburg complain to the duke of Burgundy in the following terms:

Inasmuch as the lord of Heinsberg had seized cows and livestock from Fauquemont and Rolduc, which had not yet become enemies.¹⁹

This is why letters of defiance were particularly numerous in the fourteenth century. They were the place to set forth one's grievances, to justify one's behaviour and to break the links of dependency, alliances or oaths. This is how, in 1328, the count of Luxemburg broke all treaties formerly agreed with the duke of Brabant.²⁰

There was no set form for their structure. Depending on the individual to whom they were addressed, more or fewer formalities might be included. Some of these letters are truly insulting. On 15 June 1356, Louis of Male styled Wenceslas only as duke of Luxemburg and did not recognise his title as duke of Brabant.²¹ The missive sent by William I to Charles VI was not less offensive. The formula *Carole qui vos dicitis regem Franciae*, in current use by the English chancellery, was used in its address.²² Let us note as an anecdote the misfortune of John of Bavaria, the elected of Liège, during the schism with Thierry of

¹⁸ Devillers, *Cartulaire*, I, p. 181; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 498; I, preuves, p. 201.

¹⁹ 'Quant le sire de Heinsberg eut fait prendre les vaches et bestes de Fauquemont et Rode lequel n'estoit pas encore devenu ennemi' (AGR, CC, f. 151 v.). Four days after this complaint, the lord of Heinsberg would send his declaration of war.

²⁰ BY, I, pp. 480–2.

²¹ BY, II, p. 476.

²² Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 200–1.

Perwez. During the negotiations with the rebels, he received as their response a mockery of a letter, made of bark and sealed with seven seals made of cow dung.²³ Challenges and declarations of war sometimes involved an intense degree of diplomatic activity. During the great coalition against Brabant (1332–34) more than fifteen different heralds appeared at Tervuren, before John III, to declare war against him, each in the name of their respective lord.²⁴ Later, when the count of Flanders had begun hostilities against Brabant (15 June 1356), a dozen Brabançon lords declared themselves allies of Wenceslas and announced this to Louis of Male.²⁵

In the same spirit, we also find letters intended to reassure an ally by confirming a benevolent neutrality or military support. So it was that in 1333, shortly before the great attack against Brabant, the count of Namur reaffirmed his respect for the alliances previously agreed with John III and sent similar letters to the allies of the duke. However, let us also note that this did not prevent the count from rapidly joining the coalition shortly after the opening of hostilities!²⁶

Mobilisation of troops

Once war had been declared, or just before sending the challenge, the army had to be mobilised as swiftly as possible. The duke called on the clerks of his chancellery when the more important individuals had to be informed personally:

The duke held to his word, and therefore set his clerks to work and sent them to those by whom he thought to be served and aided. These he asked, and those he commanded, and sent a challenge to the duke of Jülich.²⁷

The chancellery had sometimes to call in temporary clerks to write a large number of documents in a limited time.²⁸ He also warned his officers about it. Once orders for mobilisation had been sent, the ducal officers, the seneschal and the *justiciers*, dealt with the practical details of it.²⁹ For this purpose, they had the tocsin (*bancloche*) sounded in the territories whose populace was called to arms.³⁰ The right to sound the tocsin (*son de cloche*), in an age when means of communication were still primitive, was important and was kept strictly under the control of the ruler, his officers or the urban authorities.³¹ Elsewhere, they informed directly the vassals of the duke and called on them to prepare for war.³²

²³ De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 100.

²⁴ BY, I, pp. 495–8; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 403; Avonds, *Brabant . . . De grote*, pp. 80–1.

²⁵ AGR, Mss div., I, f. 4–5.

²⁶ Piot, *Inventaire . . . Namur*, p. 164.

²⁷ 'Le duc ne se reffroidi point de sa parole, ainchois mis clers en euvre et envoya devers ceulx desquels il pensa a estre servy et aidie. Les ungs prioit, et les autres mandoit, et envoya signiffier (défier) souffisamment le duc de Juliers' (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 20).

²⁸ AGR, CC, 2.405, f. 252.

²⁹ AGR, CR, 2.602.

³⁰ Piot, 'Notice historique sur la ville de Léau', p. 371; Gachard, 'Trois lettres de la duchesse de Brabant'; Patart, *Les cloches civiles de Namur, Fosses et Tournai*.

³¹ AGR, CR, 2.680, 2.628, 2.779.

³² AGR, CR, 2.602.

When the duke's warlike intentions were known, his relatives or friends might volunteer their services freely. This was the case for Eude, lord of Grancey, second husband of the mother of Wenceslas, who wrote around 1378 the following letter:

My most dear lord, I have heard tell that you are at war with those of the bishopric of Liege and that you are sending out orders and I wish always to work to your honour and profit and if you wish to command me I shall bring a fine troop of men-at-arms.³³

The fact that the lord of Grancey used the word *mander* for his own case weakens the hypothesis proposed by Moureaux-van Neck, according to which the terms *mandoit* (to summon) and *prioit* (to invite) used by Jean Froissart in the passage previously quoted would concern two categories of combatant, distinguishable by their rank or their ties to the duke.³⁴

Musters

The *justiciers* organised musters or inspections of arms (*wapenscouwingen*, *wapenscouwen*, *heerschouwingen*, *monstre*).³⁵ There they confirmed the presence of each man and the date from which his wage should be provided, the quality of their mounts, the state of their equipment and the number of companions in arms that accompanied the leaders of *route*. This was the occasion for the estimation of the value of the horses and equipment of each man, with a view to the eventual reimbursement of their losses. The aim of the muster was above all financial. All failure regarding military obligations was punished by fines imposed by the *justiciers*. The cause might be insufficient armament or absence pure and simple. In 1364, Coste of Ranst, *margrave* of Herentals, taxed the inhabitants of Moll and Dessel *van der wapenscouwingen, dat si niet ghepaerdt noch ghewapent en waren als si sculdich waren te sine*.³⁶ At Wambeek, the *maire* of Rhode-Saint-Genèse extracted a fine for too weak a cuirass (*pansier*).³⁷ In 1385, in a review at Oerle of all the villages of Kempenland, the inhabitants of Eersel were penalised for their absence.³⁸

Certain musters were particularly impressive. In 1388, there were gathered 1,200 *lances* and 400 archers. The duchess ordered John (III) of Polanen, lord of La Leck and Breda, and John of Wittem, *drossard*, Godevard of Montenaken, Gautier of Quadebrugghen and William of Wilre, for the town of Leuven, John the Leeuw, Nicolas (I) of Saint-Géry and Thierry of Looz, for the town of

³³ 'Mon tres chier seigneur, jay oy dire que vous aves grant guerre a ceulx de l'eveschie de Liège et que vous faites grant mandement et tousiours volrai je moy travailler pour fere votre honneur et profit sy vous plaist a moy mander je vous merray une bonne route de gent darmes . . .' (AGR, CB, 5.425).

³⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 20; Moureaux-Van Neck, *L'aide*, p. 282; Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 130–131.

³⁵ Unlike the French or Burgundian archives, very few documents exist on this subject.

³⁶ AGR, CR, 2.313.

³⁷ Bolsée, *La grande*, p. 209.

³⁸ AGR, CR, 2.781.

Brussels, to organise the muster.³⁹ The organisation of such a large review was not easy. In 1402, the duchess ordered Florent of Kijfhoek, *écouteur* of 's Hertogenbosch, to organise a general muster for this whole jurisdiction. On the day of the event, the officers responsible were not yet ready and the operation had to be postponed.⁴⁰ In peacetime, during the inspection of their jurisdiction, the *justiciers* had the right to organise local musters. Some of them abused this power, perhaps to fill their purses with fines, and complaints were made to the duke. At the start of the month of January 1408, Anthony forbade both his own officers and those of his vassals from organising more than one inspection of arms every year. Conversely, those functionaries who in exchange for bribes did not carry out these reviews would be punished by a fine of 3 gold *peters*.⁴¹

General assembly of the army

Once the troops had been locally assembled and inspected, they made their way to the general assembly point (*die gaderinge*).⁴² As there was no question of allowing bands of armed men to wander freely through the duchy, their movements took place under the control of the *justiciers*.⁴³ For this operation, everyone had to arrange to arrive in time. In 1386, the Brussels militia set out earlier than the militia of Leuven, as they were further off from the objective.⁴⁴ Delays were sometimes inevitable. Thus, John III and his men were late to arrive at the side of the king of England during the second siege of Tournai (1340) as the militia of Brabant had been slow to take up arms.⁴⁵ The place for the general assembly was often chosen at the frontier of the duchy. In 1371, the army, which was to attack the town of Jülich, gathered at Maastricht.⁴⁶ For the two expeditions against the town of Grave (1386 and 1388), they formed up at 's Hertogenbosch. During the third war of Guelders, the combatants twice gathered (1397 and 1398) at Maastricht before invading the duchy of Jülich.⁴⁷ The place of the rendezvous was thus placed neither too close to the objective, so that the enemy should not attack some isolated contingent, nor too far off, as the duke preferred not to march a large band through the middle of his territories. Both 's Hertogenbosch and Maastricht lay on the borders of Brabant and at only two days march from the objective. These great meetings took place outside the town. The army needed space and the urban area, often bounded by a curtain wall, was too limited. Furthermore, the Magistracy feared the disturbances that might be caused by the stationing or the passage of numerous strangers within the city. For this reason, in 1398, the men-at-arms met in the fields before

³⁹ BR, Mss, 14.511, f. 108 et seq.

⁴⁰ AGR, CR, 2.818.

⁴¹ AGR, CC, 131, f. 45 v.; CC, 154, f. 130 v.

⁴² VH, pp. 49, 109, 160 or 223.

⁴³ AGR, CR, 2.602.

⁴⁴ DD, III, p. 113.

⁴⁵ This explanation is far more credible in accounting for the lateness of John III than is his claimed unwillingness to join with Edward III against France (DD, II, p. 636).

⁴⁶ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21.

⁴⁷ DD, III, pp. 131–2, 135–6; Fairon, *Regestes*, III, pp. 46–7.

Maastricht, and only after being ordered, would they pass peacefully through the town.⁴⁸

Demobilising the troops

Demobilising an army is not an easy matter. Hundreds or even thousands of armed men could not possibly be allowed to traverse the country freely during their return home. This might just be acceptable if the combatants were victorious and laden with booty, but in the case of a defeated army, the worst could happen. The demobilisation of the troops was thus an operation closely linked to the national security. Again, it was the *justiciers* and their subordinates who were charged with this operation. They chose and oversaw the routes of return for the contingents, as did Charles of Immerzeel, *margrave* of Rijen, in 1388.⁴⁹

In a settlement of 28 February 1357, Joan declared that she owed to Henry of Schönraht and his two companions the sum of 54 old *écus* for their service of eighteen days, including four days for their return home.⁵⁰ Other documents contain exactly the same clause.⁵¹ It is possible that these men-at-arms might have demanded that their return counted as part of the duration of their services, or that the measure was taken to ensure that they, left to their own devices, should not trouble the civilian population for their subsistence. In France, a similar system called the *venues et retours* was in use until about 1369.⁵² In England, the arrayed men marched without pay to their county boundary, then at the county's expense to the sea. There after they were at the king's wages.⁵³

The order of the march and the movements

The order of the march

For reasons of safety, an army did not travel as a rabble. In 1393, some 400 Maastrichtois who had forgotten this measure were quite easily beaten and put to flight by the men of the count of Moers.⁵⁴ Therefore, the captains adopted an order of march that allowed swifter movement, the maintenance of discipline and easier defence. The column was the formation generally adopted, as the means of communication between the fighters were still too rudimentary to make use of more complex formations. We are poorly informed regarding the practical organisation of that column. At the head and the flanks, scouts patrolled. The men-at-arms do not seem to have had a well-defined post. It is likely that the members of a same unit remained together during movements, in camp and in battle.⁵⁵ It was the responsibility of the marshal of the duke of Brabant to fix the order of the army. In 1418, it was formed thus:

⁴⁸ DD, III, p. 136.

⁴⁹ AGR, CR, 2.329.

⁵⁰ AGR, CB, 1.015.

⁵¹ AGR, CB, 923 or 1.020.

⁵² Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 102–3, 156.

⁵³ Hewitt, *The Organization*, pp. 40–3.

⁵⁴ *La chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 423; De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 341.

⁵⁵ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 172.

The vanguard under the orders of the marshal
 The duke and his *gens de maisnie*
 The knights
 The militias of Brussels and Leuven
 The militias of Antwerp and 's Hertogenbosch
 The rearguard commanded by the lord of Grimbergen⁵⁶

The urban militias had their own internal organisation. Unfortunately, once again, information on this subject is fragmentary. For example, we know that in 1334, John III ordered the *commoignemaîtres* of Leuven to remain with their *échevins* in wartime,⁵⁷ but we know nothing more about the marching order of the militiamen of this town. The combatants from the same administrative division were kept together. The militiamen of the six *mairies* of the *ammanie* of Brussels (Asse, Merchtem, Capelle-au-Bois, Campenhout, Vilvorde and Rhode-Saint-Genèse) travelled together.⁵⁸ The same went for the other localities of the duchy.⁵⁹ Conflicts over jurisdiction sometimes occurred. During the siege of Geertruidenberg (1418), the leaders of the militia both of Leuven and of Antwerp claimed that the inhabitants of Lierre and the *banc* of Zandhoven should fight in their contingent. John IV brought a temporary resolution to the conflict by assigning the keeping of Breda to the men of Lierre. Thus, they did not accompany the rest of the army.⁶⁰ This affair continued to poison relations between the two towns for several years and was finally resolved in favour of Leuven in May 1425.⁶¹ Matters of precedence between the different towns regularly disturbed the order of the march or the camp. In 1340, while John III was preparing to besiege Tournai, an argument broke out between the militias of Brussels and Leuven. Both wished to be at the head of the army, for reasons of prestige.⁶² On 5 August their difference was settled. From then on, under the supervision of the marshal, during operations in the north and the east of the duchy, Brussels would be at the head of the army, while during expeditions to the south and the west, it would be the town of Leuven that led the troops. The unit leading the army would also have the honour of occupying in the camp the position on the duke's right hand.⁶³

⁵⁶ DD, III, pp. 373–4.

⁵⁷ BY, I, p. 792.

⁵⁸ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 76.

⁵⁹ The inhabitants of Kiel accompanied those of Antwerp in military expeditions (Goetschalckx, 't *Klooster*, p. 39), those of Santhoven kept with the townsmen of Lierre (BY, I, pp. 791) or Leuven (BY, I, pp. 806–7) or while the militia of Hoegaarden followed the banner of Tirlemont (AGR, Mss div., 5/D, f. 75).

⁶⁰ BY, III, p. 341.

⁶¹ AVL, 1.353; Uyttebrouck, 'Liste', p. 259.

⁶² DD, II, pp. 633–4; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 210–11; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 414–15.

⁶³ *Den luyster*, I, pp. 116–18; DD, II, pp. 634–6.

The length of the march and the speed of movement

The army only travelled by day, from dawn to dusk.⁶⁴ Only small units could travel by night without risk of losing formation. Night marches were used during minor operations when it was desirable to approach the enemy without being observed or to evade him discreetly.⁶⁵ According to Gaier, the armies were able to undertake daily marches of 25 kilometres, but this pace could not be maintained for many days at a time.⁶⁶ However, I have estimated that, in 1388, the contingent commanded by Philip the Bold achieved daily journeys of a little over 20 kilometres for about ten days.⁶⁷ We should not forget that the speed of a troop depended on its composition. Small military operation could be executed faster when *impedimenta* were hauled by pack animals rather than by carts. In 1415, shortly before his death at Agincourt, Anthony and his few companions dashed almost 200 kilometres in less than 48 hours. To maintain such a rate, the small troop carried reduced baggage, set off early in the morning and rode late into the night.⁶⁸ Circumstances were rarely so favourable and the body of the troops had to match the pace of the slowest element. If not, the column would break up and become too vulnerable. Let us recall that by the estimation of Bachrach, a wagon with a load of about 500 kg, drawn by two oxen, could be expected under the best conditions to traverse no more than fifteen kilometres per day, and drawn by two horses or mules could at best travel twice as fast.⁶⁹ If these wagons travelled with the soldiers, the whole army was held back. If they followed at their own pace, their protection had to be provided for as convoys were a choice target for an enemy.

Speed and comfort depended largely on the quality of the roads that were taken. The ancient Roman roads that still criss-cross our lands were particularly convenient. In 1371, Wenceslas gathered his army at Maastricht, which allowed him to use the old Roman road leading directly to the town of Jülich. A little later, the army commanded by Charles IV followed the same route.⁷⁰ Similarly, in 1388 the army of Charles VI wished to take the Roman road to attack the duchy of Guelders. This was refused, and he had to engage labourers to open a route through the dense forests of Luxembourg.⁷¹

Permission to cross neutral or allied territories

Brabant, like other medieval principalities and unlike modern states, did not form a compact block of lands but rather was composed of many domains set within other territories, friendly, neutral or hostile.⁷² It was therefore sometimes necessary to ask permission to pass through a neighbouring territory in order to enter one's own domain or enemy lands. The situation of the duchy of Limburg

⁶⁴ *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, I, p. 530; *Historia Gelriae*, p. 64.

⁶⁵ DD, III, pp. 28, 125, 126, etc.

⁶⁶ Gaier, *Art*, p. 120.

⁶⁷ This was a small troop of mounted men-at-arms (Boffa, 'Les conflits', pp. 81–2).

⁶⁸ Boffa, 'Antoine', pp. 268–9.

⁶⁹ Bachrach, 'Animals', p. 717.

⁷⁰ Oidtmann, *Die Schlacht*, pp. 8–9; Zimmerman, 'Die Schlacht', p. 274.

⁷¹ Boffa, 'Les conflits', pp. 36, 47–8.

⁷² Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 43–111; Genicot, 'Ligne et zone'.

and the lands of Outre-Meuse was such that the duke could not go there without crossing either the county of Looz or the principality of Liège. In other words, he could not directly invade the duchy of Jülich. A most delicate situation, since the lords of these principalities regularly adopted a hostile stance towards Brabant. From a geostrategic point of view, this situation was not without its dangers, as an example clearly shows. In 1334, Louis IV, count of Looz, authorised the duke to cross his lands in order to reach Rolduc. He then suddenly changed his attitude, allied himself with the bishop of Liège and the other enemies of Brabant, and attacked the Brabançons from the rear. Disaster was only just avoided.⁷³ In 1337, when peace reigned once more, Thierry of Heinsberg, count of Looz, granted to John III and his heirs the right to pass through his county whenever it became necessary.⁷⁴

In case of an alliance between different parties, they would promise not only safe passage for their allies through their domains, but also to block the passage of all the enemies of their allies. Thus, Philip VI, in the agreement of Saint-Quentin (1347), promised John III that he and his heirs:

We will not allow the aforementioned enemies to pass through our lands, power or lordship if it appears or is known that they wish to attack the aforesaid duke, his subjects or his lands.⁷⁵

John III swore a similar oath in return. Later, thanks to the treaty of 14 October 1356 concluded with the Liégeois, Wenceslas was able to bring into Brabant an army composed principally of German knights and thus to liberate the duchy.⁷⁶

Not only foreign rulers had to be taken into account when deciding on an itinerary. The local population feared the passage of armed bands and were ready to defend by force their goods and property. In 1388, the Estates would not permit even their French and Burgundian allies to cross the duchy.⁷⁷ The Luxembourgish, who could not oppose the king of France, would watch closely the movements of the royal host.⁷⁸ In 1407, Anthony experienced difficulty in gaining passage for his men-at-arms through Maastricht, although he was himself the legitimate lord of the town.⁷⁹

Means of transport

The horses

A man-at-arms of a certain standing possessed several different types of horse: the destrier (*dextrarius*), the warhorse par excellence; the rouncy (*runcinus*, *ronchin*), a warhorse of a lesser quality; the courser (*cursarius*, *fugator*,

⁷³ DD, II, pp. 568–70; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 155.

⁷⁴ AGR, CB, 457; DD, II, pp. 595–6.

⁷⁵ 'Ne souffrerons que le diz ennemis passent par notre pays, povoir ou seigneurie ou cas qu'il apperoit ou seroit renommée que il volsissent grever le dit duc, ses subgès ou ses pays en aucune manière' (Laurent, 'Les conventions', pp. 122–3, 126).

⁷⁶ BY, II, pp. 517–18, 521; DD, III, p. 28; Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, pp. 235–6.

⁷⁷ Boffa, 'Les conflits', p. 34.

⁷⁸ Boffa, 'Les conflits', p. 36.

⁷⁹ Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 318–21; Bormans and Schoolmeesters, *Cartulaire*, VI, p. 142.

courchier), used for hunting; the palfrey (*palfridus*, *palafridus*), ridden while travelling; the *sommelier* (*summarius*), a packhorse; and the carthorse (*carestarius*, *veredarius*, *chevaux de chars*). In wartime, he was accompanied by several of these animals according to the situation.⁸⁰ Horses might become sick, lame or killed in battle, and remounts were needed. This numerous train explains the necessary presence of a squire, responsible for his master's warhorse, and a valet responsible for secondary tasks, alongside him. The warhorse had to possess many several qualities, which Davis summarises thus:

It had to be strong enough to carry an armed knight at a gallop, tall enough to dominate the opposing infantry, steady enough not to panic at the sound of battle, brave enough to bear wounds, and fierce enough to take an aggressive part in the fight, without losing the advantage of its natural agility.⁸¹

Such an animal was not easy to find. It was not met with by chance, but was the result of importation,⁸² judicious breeding and rigorous training. For this reason, the price of a destrier (*magnus equus*, *grant chival*) was particularly high. The capture of such a horse was therefore considered as a prize equal to armour or even jewels. For this reason also, combatants often demanded the replacement of mounts lost during military operations (*restor*). The duke did not have to furnish mounts for his men-at-arms. It was for the combatant to present himself with good horses at the muster. If he failed in this duty, he risked not being enrolled, and if he were obliged to serve the duke by some form of contract, he would be subject to a fine. John called Bastin was so punished in 1335 *quod non habuit equum sufficientem*.⁸³ In 1398, it was the turn of the lady of Steensel to be fined.⁸⁴ The man-at-arms, even if he fought on foot, travelled on horseback to increase the mobility of the troops. In the second half of the fourteenth century the horse was therefore more than ever a vital element of an army on campaign, in which the number of mounts was often much greater than the number of combatants.

The *corvées* of the religious establishments

In wartime, the duke had great need of wagons. The carriages went out bearing arms or nourishment and returned carrying booty, wounded men or sometimes prisoners.⁸⁵ The duke had various possible means to provide himself with the transport necessary to the good execution of military operations. The abbey had to carry out *corvées* of carriage to the prince.⁸⁶ A first list of these was made around 1356⁸⁷ and, after 1397, another list was prepared.⁸⁸ The dates of these

⁸⁰ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 17, 18.

⁸¹ Davis, *The Medieval*, p. 11.

⁸² Antwerp would have been an important market to buy and to sell horses (Schnerb, 'Le cheval', p. 78).

⁸³ AGR, CR, 2.603.

⁸⁴ AGR, CR, 2.805.

⁸⁵ VH, pp. 163–4.

⁸⁶ Van Uytven, 'Wereldlijke', pp. 116–22.

⁸⁷ Gorissen, 'De karweien der Brabantsche kloosterhoeven'.

⁸⁸ AGR, CB, 7.055.

two documents, on the eve of the war of the succession of Brabant and during the third war of Guelders, show clearly the importance of these services in wartime.⁸⁹ The total number of these *corvées* amounted to 1,600 each year. Each *corvée* was worth two days of service with a wagon, a team of six horses, and a crew of two valets. The cart had to be able to carry either two millstones, two *pieds* of wine, ten *muids* of rye or 16 *muids* of oats or of barley.⁹⁰ A special officer, the master of *corvées*, was in charge of this service. In wartime, he was able to collect 130 wagons (*waghen*), three carts (*kerre*) and 23 to 28 draught horses.⁹¹ While the valets lived at the duke's expense, the horses had to forage from the countryside while travelling.⁹²

Some of the wagons were for specific functions. Those of the abbey of Ter Bank were at the disposal of the *Maréchalerie* (*Maerscalerien*).⁹³ Those of the hospice of Vilvorde went to the Stables (*Stalle*).⁹⁴ Grand-Bigard and Cortenberg provided for the Chamber (*Camere*).⁹⁵ The carts of the abbeys of Affligem and of Forest carried the military equipment (*hernasch*) of the duke. Forest also dealt with the ducal kitchen (*betterien*).⁹⁶ Gorissen holds that the wagons of the abbey of Affligem did not carry the standard of Brabant, contrary to the opinion of de Ring.⁹⁷ I do not agree. This banner was kept at that monastery and it seems reasonable that one of its wagons should carry it. What is more, Butkens mentions a register for the year 1440, which specifies that the abbey *étoit obligée d'entretenir un chariot à ses frais pour le service du Guidon*.⁹⁸ This loan of wagons was not without risk. The *beguines* and the *Dames-Blanches* of Brussels lost their carts and probably their teams at Worringen. This provided a pretext for the *Dames-Blanches* to refuse all service to the duke during his subsequent expeditions. The *beguines* limited their offering to the one cart that remained to them. The excuse was still in use in 1356.⁹⁹

The other means of obtaining carriage

The religious establishments were not alone in being obliged to furnish carriages for war. Certain other places had also to provide these *corvées*. For example, in 1224, Henry I excused the inhabitants of Bunswijk from all taxes in exchange for certain provisions including the carriage of his arms by means of three wagons during military expeditions.¹⁰⁰ Since the number of *corvées* to be

⁸⁹ AGR, CR, 2.499–2.518, account of 1388–1404; Pinchart, *Inventaire . . . Chambres des Comptes*, IV, pp. 192 et seq.; Vanden Bussche, 'Une complainte ecclésiastique au duc de Brabant'.

⁹⁰ AGR, CB, 2.893; Erens, *De oorkonden*, III, p. 349.

⁹¹ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 11.

⁹² Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 11, 25.

⁹³ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 47.

⁹⁴ Gorissen, 'De karweien', p. 47.

⁹⁵ Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 28, 30.

⁹⁶ Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 28, 34.

⁹⁷ De Ring, 'L'étendard', p. 474.

⁹⁸ Butkens, *Les trophées*, III, pp. 156–7.

⁹⁹ Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 45–6.

¹⁰⁰ AGR, CC, 8, f. 50 v.; Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1189–90; Steurs, 'Les franchises', p. 240.

furnished by the religious establishments and other localities was fixed, as a conflict dragged on, they ran out and the duke had to resort to other means to obtain carriage. The simplest method was to hire or to buy carts and wagons.¹⁰¹ In this case, a special tax was sometimes gathered, as occurred during the war of Heinsberg (1371), the *chevauchée* of Jülich (1371) and also in the period of tensions between the towns and the duke (1374) when many villages were imposed on for the transport of provisions and of arms for the *drossard*.¹⁰² Certain leaders of *route* followed the duke with their own means of transport. In October 1407, John, lord of Bois and Annequin, served Anthony with forty-two men, forty-four horses, two valets and a cart with four horses.¹⁰³ All these vehicles, and certainly those requisitioned for the *corvées*, were of an ordinary type and not at all designed to carry the *impedimenta* of the combatants. Only in a few cases, certain carriages were reserved for this use, such as one of the carts of John IV, protected by a linen covering.¹⁰⁴

Encampment and lodgings

When the army was on the march, the combatants slept in tents (*tentoria*, *papiliones*, *pauwelioene*) in the fields. The arsenals of the towns and of the trades were so provided and men-at-arms carried their own.¹⁰⁵ While John Beus remained at home through sickness, he lent his tent to the *maire* of Vilvorde.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the militiamen and the men-at-arms were responsible for their own shelter.

The disposition of men in the camp was organised by the marshal of the duke of Brabant.¹⁰⁷ In 1418, the Brabançon camp before Dordrecht was organised in an instructive fashion:

When John IV, on account of Jacqueline the adulterer, besieged Dordrecht, closest to the city were the Bruxellois, then the duke's nobility, third those of Leuven, fourth those of Antwerp and fifth those of 's Hertogenbosch.¹⁰⁸

Thus, the encampment was sometimes organised similarly to the order of march. Naturally, militiamen of a given administrative division were pitched in the same place. For example, after an ordinance of John III, the people of Zandhoven and of Lierre had to lodge with those of Leuven.¹⁰⁹ During the siege

¹⁰¹ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 70, 124; Boffa, 'Le ravitaillement', p. 208; Gaier, 'L'approvisionnement', pp. 568–9.

¹⁰² AGR, CB, 2.872–2.873, 2.894–2.897, 2.902, 4.683–4.684.

¹⁰³ AGR, CC, 2.394, f. 178.

¹⁰⁴ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 94 r.–v.

¹⁰⁵ AGR, CB 1.230; VH, p. 319; Le Bel, *Vraies*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁶ Calbrecht, *De oorsprong*, pp. 50–1.

¹⁰⁷ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 163.

¹⁰⁸ 'Quum Joannes IV, propter Jacobam adulteram, obsideret Dordracum, proximi ad civitatem erant Bruxellenses, deinde nobiles ducis, tertii Lovanienses, quarti Antwerpienses et quinti Buscoducenses' (Molanus, *Historiae*, II, p. 842).

¹⁰⁹ AVL, 1.303, 1.353; Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 230–1.

of 1386, despite the dissension that reigned between the nobles and the commoners, the castellan of Brussels, their commander, lodged with the town's militia.¹¹⁰ Hence, in case of a surprise attack, everyone would still be among their companions in arms under their usual banner and at the orders of their commander. Problems of precedence were of course not forgotten. In 1340, the militias of Brussels and of Leuven argued among themselves over the right to lodge at the right hand of the duke.¹¹¹

The safety of the camp was ensured by posting a guard. It was vital to prevent the enemy from launching a surprise attack against troops who were not ready to give battle. This threat was even greater in enemy territory. In this case, it was sometimes necessary to fortify the camp. The Brabançons acted thus during the siege of Grave.¹¹² However, after a victorious battle, the euphoria was sometimes such that even the most elementary precautions were forgotten. The evening after Worringen, the victors thought it pointless to protect themselves against a routed foe.¹¹³ Safety in camp, as on the march, depended largely on the order and discipline of the troops. Unfortunately, we have not found any testimony on this subject for the period that concerns us.

After winning on the field, the victors would often pillage and occupy the camp of the losers. Thus, after the defeat at Scheut:

The count of Flanders and many others lodged in the tents of the lords whom they had defeated in battle. There they could take what they pleased, as the lords of Brabant had taken nothing but what they had upon them, and left their tents, armours, provisions and all their baggage.¹¹⁴

Where a smaller number of combatants were concerned, it was possible to billet them with the populace or in religious establishments. This was often the case with troops in a garrison.¹¹⁵ In 1332, the Brabançons even lodged in houses abandoned by the enemy.¹¹⁶ Since a ruler had to remain on good terms with their subjects, the duchess still took care that abuses should be punished. On 13 August 1384, she ordered the *justiciers* to prevent, by force if need be, the men-at-arms from lodging in houses of the order of Saint-Jean of Jerusalem against the wishes of the brothers.¹¹⁷ It seems that the duke reimbursed the cost of lodgings to men-at-arms whom he placed in garrisons. So at least it appears from certain accounts.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰ DD, III, pp. 113–14.

¹¹¹ DD, II, p. 815.

¹¹² *Historia Gelriae*, p. 63.

¹¹³ VH, pp. 323–4.

¹¹⁴ 'Le conte de Flandres et plusieurs aultres se logerrent es tentes des seigneurs qu'ilz avoient lessé sur les champs. Là, gaigna assez qui gaagner voulut, car nul des seigneurs des Brabanchons n'enporta aultre-chose que ce qu'il avoit sur son corps, ains lesserrent tentes, harnas, pourveances et tout leur bagage' (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 231).

¹¹⁵ AGR, CB, 1.009.

¹¹⁶ DD, II, pp. 798–9.

¹¹⁷ AGR, CC, 149, f. 112 v.

¹¹⁸ Boffa, 'Le ravitaillement', p. 208; Gaier, 'L'approvisionnement', pp. 564–6.

Provisioning the army

Introduction

Provisioning troops on campaign or in garrison is a most complex operation. While it seems natural for the man-at-arms to live off the country, it was dangerous to leave to him the task of obtaining his necessities, as this would distract from the real mission and risk serious hostilities with the local population, friendly or enemy, who might be irremediably alienated. This is why, in 1338, Edward III ordered that his allies crossing Brabant had to pay their expenses properly.¹¹⁹ Again, it was not without hindsight that the count of Flanders ordered his men-at-arms to pay for all their food while they were occupying Brussels in 1356.¹²⁰ It might be demanded that each man should bring his own provisions, but this system was scarcely feasible in an era when the quality of rations was still dubious and their preservation was difficult. What is more, it was difficult to know in advance the duration of the campaign and hence the amount of food to be brought. What is more, the difficulties of transporting slaughtered animals without adequate means of preservation and the problems of driving herds of cattle and sheep along with the baggage train would have been great. However, to rely as a matter of long-term strategic planning on success at foraging is a prescription for military disaster.

The obligations of the duke

Unlike some of his neighbours, the duke usually fed the men in his service.¹²¹ We find records of these expenses in the accounts of the *recette générale*.¹²² When the seneschal and some hundreds of men-at-arms garrisoned Ivoix for eighteen days, from 20 February to 9 March 1376, the provost of the town provided, for the payment and upkeep of his troops, the sum of 1,726 *francs* and 11 *vieux gros* and fifty carp, twelve pounds of wax, fifty-seven cattle, and eighty-one sheep.¹²³ The combatants who served on campaign enjoyed the same kind of treatment. In several wartime accounts, which have come down to us, we see the duke reimbursing their expenses for food.¹²⁴ The ruler took care not only of the combatants but also of some of those who accompanied the army and fulfilled secondary roles. In the list of *corvées* of the abbeys, it was specified that the valets who accompanied the carts would live at the duke's expense.¹²⁵ It thus seems to be established that the prince had a duty to take care of his men's nourishment. When dealing with a small contingent, this task was not too

¹¹⁹ AGR, CB, 459.

¹²⁰ DD, III, p. 27.

¹²¹ This was not the case in Liège but it was so for Flanders, where the count reimbursed the costs occasioned by victualling (Gaier, *Art*, pp. 53, 87; Verbruggen, *Het leger*, p. 56).

¹²² AGR, CC, 2.351, f. 77–9; Uyttebrouck, 'Notes et réflexions', p. 236.

¹²³ AGR, CLux, 1.204.

¹²⁴ This was the case in 1385, when Joan paid John of Gronsveld for the expenses he had suffered at the siege of Reifferscheid (Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–2).

¹²⁵ Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 11, 25.

complex, but when dealing with an army of some thousands of men travelling through enemy territory, the operation was a great deal more difficult.

The towns, by contrast, were responsible for their own militia. At least, this was the case for Brussels, which regulated, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the nature of its provision. The carts of the town carried mostly bread and wine. Also provided were salt, peas, butter, vinegar, mustard, tallow candles, wax candles, torches, groceries (*cokencruyt*), lard, herbs (*cruyt*), material for making the consacred host (*hostienwerc*), bales of cloth, cheese, preserved meats (*baecvleesch*), cooking utensils, table linen and eggs.¹²⁶ This regulation seems to have been followed, or so we gather from some descriptions of the army of Brussels on campaign, for example, when the militia of Brussels fought at Baesweiler¹²⁷ or, some years later, while they were besieging Gaasbeek. At that time, they brought such quantities of food, including many chickens, that they received the nickname of *Kiekefretters* or 'eater of chickens'.¹²⁸

Practical organisation of supply

In general, it was for the ducal officers, *justiciers* and receivers, to organise the supply and to deal with the consequent expenses and reimbursements.¹²⁹ A command by Wenceslas is very clear on this point. In 1371, he ordered the receiver of Limburg to aid, with all his power, the seneschal of Rolduc by sending a supply of food, of munitions or any other thing necessary for the men-at-arms defending the *pays*.¹³⁰ The same happened when John IV decided to place at Nivelles a large army, whose strength amounted to a little more 1,500 combatants, to defend the frontier of the duchy. The receiver of the *bailliage* of Jodoigne was charged with providing for their subsistence.¹³¹ The simplest method of obtaining victuals was to requisition them. The dukes appear to have abused this power, and a complaint was made to John III by the ecclesiastics of Brabant and of Hainault in 1338.¹³² Otherwise, the ducal officers bought food in the towns of the duchy¹³³ or in the dower lands of Joan.¹³⁴ Even so, the system of purchases, contrary to what one might expect, was not a universal solution. In 1398, the town of Aachen, an imperial city, refused to sell provisions to the Brabançons while the latter were at war with the duke of Guelders and of Jülich.¹³⁵ Let us note that in Brabant we have found no trace of the system of forced purchase of victuals as used in England, a system called *Purveyance*.¹³⁶

¹²⁶ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 76.

¹²⁷ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 22.

¹²⁸ Henry, 'De Brusselse Kiekefretters'.

¹²⁹ DD, III, p. 112.

¹³⁰ AGR, CB, 2.866 bis.

¹³¹ Boffa, 'Le ravitaillement d'une troupe brabançonne'.

¹³² Vanden Bussche, 'Une plainte', pp. 124–5.

¹³³ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 24, 28–9, 56.

¹³⁴ AGR, CC, 8.782/2, f. 36.

¹³⁵ DD, III, p. 139.

¹³⁶ Prestwich, *Armies*, pp. 254–7.

The provisions were shared among the combatants. We have no information about how this was done. We only know that in case of shortage, it did not run smoothly and tensions arose.¹³⁷

The diet of the combatants

The sources do not allow us to calculate the daily rations of the combatants. We can at least gain a fairly precise idea of the nature of their victuals. The accounts show that large purchases of wheat as bread was the staple diet of the soldier. On campaign, the grain was often crudely milled using simple hand mills.¹³⁸ Meat was not absent from the daily diet. Usually it was mutton, but oxen, cows, swine, small sows, ewes, poultry and game were also eaten. On fast days, the combatants ate fish (freshwater or saltwater), generally salted or dried. Few dairy products were consumed. Sometimes cheese or eggs served as an alternative to fish on fast days.¹³⁹ Vegetables were not forgotten, most usually peas and onions, which no doubt went to make soup. Sometimes fruit was also on the menu. Large quantities of salt were bought. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether this was table salt or intended for the preservation of meat by pickling. Spices (pepper, mustard, saffron, cinnamon or ginger) were also used. As the water was untrustworthy, it was better to drink wine or beer so as to avoid dysentery, that scourge of armies. There is no mention of any other drink such as milk or cider, although these were drunk in Brabant at the time. The archives inform us that the troops consumed huge amounts of wine while the army was on campaign. This was not unusual, and from the works of Keegan, we know that the combatants made much use thereof to increase their courage before a battle.¹⁴⁰

Food for animals

There were a large number of animals in an army; not only the horses of the men-at-arms and their valets but also beasts of burden. It was of vital importance to nourish them well, but this task was difficult even if their dietary needs were simple. Davis estimates that an army with about 2,500 horses consumed about 10,000 kg of hay every day and 50,000 litres of water.¹⁴¹ In the fourteenth century, the normal diet of horses included oats, hay, beans, peas and straw. For this reason, the duke did not hesitate to order that the carthorses should forage for food while on the road.¹⁴² The horses of the combatants were sometimes better treated, as we find expenses on hay.¹⁴³ The accounts of the large army placed in garrison at Nivelles (1,216 horses) in 1425 tell us that they were fed on

¹³⁷ DD, III, pp. 139–40.

¹³⁸ Le Bel, *Vraies*, II, p. 299; Boffa, 'Les soutiens', pp. 21–2; Gaier, *Art*, p. 86; Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 646–7.

¹³⁹ Gaier, 'L'approvisionnement', p. 560.

¹⁴⁰ Keegan, *The Face*, p. 115; Hanson, *Le modèle*, pp. 169–75.

¹⁴¹ Davis, *The Medieval*, pp. 78–9; Bachrach, 'Animals', pp. 718–20.

¹⁴² Gorissen, 'De karweien', pp. 11, 25.

¹⁴³ AGR, CR, 2.603.

oats,¹⁴⁴ that hay was used for their bedding and that the ducal officers furnished them with horseshoes, saddles or reins.¹⁴⁵

The duke was however less concerned with the wellbeing of the animals than with that of his men. He avoided spending too much money on their upkeep, where possible. Hence, the departure of a military expedition often coincided with the appearance of the new grass (*dnuwe gras*).¹⁴⁶ As a result, the countryside was ravaged by men-at-arms gathering fodder on the land.¹⁴⁷ In the treaty of 3 December 1339, between John III and Louis of Nevers, count of Flanders, there is a curious article. The two parties promised to aid each other mutually in all circumstances at their own costs and expense, except where fodder for their horses was concerned, which should be provided by the land being aided.¹⁴⁸ Since we have already seen that fodder for the horses was usually found on the march, presumably the party being helped would have to provide food for the horses unless they wished to see their own fields despoiled.

Manufacture of weapons

Gaier distinguishes four industrial centres linked to the manufacture of weapons in the southern Low Countries: the groups of Brabant, Flanders, Hainault and Mosan. Not surprisingly, the towns of Brabant, along with those of Flanders, were the most active.¹⁴⁹ The case of Brussels is well known and will serve as an example.¹⁵⁰ The blacksmiths and armourers rapidly established themselves in the centre of the town. We can still find traces of their presence in the names of certain old streets in the capital: the *rue des Armuriers* or the *rue des Eperonniers*. In the fourteenth century, seventy-three makers of armour, sixty-six blacksmiths, forty-two cutlers and around two hundreds metalworkers were involved at one time or another in the production of arms. These figures suffice to underline the importance of this industry to the town. The activities of the cannon-makers should not be ignored. At the start of the fifteenth century, the foundry of William of Dielbeke was in full flower.¹⁵¹ Cannons from Brussels were of high quality; indeed, we find a piece stamped with the letters of *Brucelle* dragged by sixteen horses from Chartres to Dijon in 1410–11.¹⁵² Certain craftsmen were capable of veritable *tours de force*. In particular, Pasquier den Kick, *donderbusmeester* to Antoine of Burgundy, forged between

¹⁴⁴ Whereas the English used oats as food, in the Low Countries oats were fed only to the horses.

¹⁴⁵ Boffa, 'Le ravitaillement d'une troupe brabançonne'.

¹⁴⁶ Van Boendale, 'Van den derden', pp. 317, 339.

¹⁴⁷ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 237.

¹⁴⁸ AGR, CB, 621 bis; *Den luyster*, I, pp. 108–16.

¹⁴⁹ Gaier, *L'industrie*, pp. 116–56; Stroobants, 'De Antwerpse wapenmakers en hun privileges'.

¹⁵⁰ Squilbeck, 'Le travail du métal à Bruxelles'; Sosson, 'Quelques aspects sociaux de l'artisanat bruxellois du métal'; Sosson, 'L'artisanat bruxellois du métal'; Libois, 'La confrérie de Saint-Eloy de Bruxelles'.

¹⁵¹ Sosson, 'Quelques', p. 109.

¹⁵² Garnier, *L'artillerie*, p. 33.

1409 and 1411 one of the largest cannon of the time, weighing over 35 tons.¹⁵³ The reputation of the Brabançons was such that they fulfilled commissions, not only for the duke, but also for other rulers in the region such as the count of Hainault and the duke of Burgundy.¹⁵⁴ The rest of their production was sold to individuals, to other towns, or sent to the markets of Antwerp¹⁵⁵ and Bergen-op-Zoom.¹⁵⁶ The duke, his knights and the men-at-arms had no difficulty in obtaining the tools of their warlike occupations, be they personal arms, heavy weapons or raw materials.

Munitions and various equipments

It was reasonable to demand that a combatant – man-at-arms, townsman or member of the trades – present himself at a muster equipped with his cuirass, his sword, his lance or his bow. No doubt, this is why we find no major purchases of arms on the eve of large-scale military operations. Purchases were often limited to the acquisition of heavy and costly materials. At the end of the fourteenth century and at the beginning of the fifteenth century, this meant principally the acquisition of new artillery pieces. The duke, like any responsible soldier, took great care of his own equipment. Before the departure of Wenceslas for Jülich in 1371, various repairs were made to his armour (*harnaghium ducis*)¹⁵⁷ and he ordered new pieces for his hands (*cyrothecarum ferreis*), his knees (*pollanen*) and legs (*cussieris*).¹⁵⁸

As it was difficult, perhaps impossible, to supply oneself with arrows or other munitions during an expedition, it was better to make provision in advance.¹⁵⁹ In 1418, John IV bought 1,736 cannonballs from Vilvorde for the siege of Dordrecht.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, he ordered the making of gunpowder at Antwerp. A flour-mill situated near the Saint-Georges gate was hired and the miller was charged with the fabrication of powder.¹⁶¹ In an emergency, reuse was necessary. In the same year, 61 old stone projectiles, deeply buried in the embankments surrounding the fortress of Vilvorde, were dug up and remade at 9-inch calibre by the mason Henric Andries.¹⁶²

In certain circumstances, the ruler provided clothing to the combatants. This was very rare, however, as at the time the use of uniforms was not frequent. In 1374, the duke of Luxemburg ordered his provost of Binche to provide

¹⁵³ AGR, CC, 2.394, f. 165; CC, 2.395, f. 81 r.–v., 217 r.–v., 326 v., 327 r.; Asaert, 'Quinten', pp. 249–52.

¹⁵⁴ Froissart, *Chroniques*, X, p. 171; Sosson, 'Quelques', p. 105; Sosson, 'L'artisanat', p. 243; Gaier, *L'industrie*, pp. 132–3, 325–6.

¹⁵⁵ Van Den Branden and Bisschops, 'Oudt register mette berderen'; Unger, *De tol van Iersekeroord*; Doehaerd, *Compte du tonlieu d'Anvers*.

¹⁵⁶ Sloomans, 'Les marchands brabançons et, plus spécialement, les marchands bruxellois aux foires de Berg-op-Zoom'.

¹⁵⁷ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 66.

¹⁵⁸ AGR, CC, 2.358, f. 66.

¹⁵⁹ AGR, CR, 2.602, 2.603, 2.785.

¹⁶⁰ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 93 r.–v.

¹⁶¹ AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 89 v.–90 r.

¹⁶² AGR, CC, 2.401, f. 93 v.

pourpoints to John van den Veen and his companions in arms.¹⁶³ Finally, we find in the accounts a whole series of common items. Containers (bowls, pots or jugs) were bought for carrying, candles and wax to make tapers, kitchen utensils, charcoal and so on.¹⁶⁴ These would have eased the daily life of the combatants. All these expenses, principally those for heavy equipment, could have a decisive influence on the progress of a conflict. During the siege of Dordrecht (1418), William van den Berghe, lord of Orbais and ducal counsellor, refused to buy siege equipment under the pretext that the ducal finances would not allow it. Thus, the Brabançons were deprived of the strength required to breach the walls and were unable to take the town.¹⁶⁵ The provisioning of towns and strongholds was not less costly. During a local conflict, this was a secondary consideration, but in the case of war on a large scale, it required major organisation. During the great coalition against Brabant (1332–34), Edmond de Dynter tells us that the duke had to provide arms and nourishments for 32 towns and fortified scattered across the duchy.¹⁶⁶

Conclusions

According to Gaier, 'the diet of the troops on campaign or when garrisoned in the lands of Outre-Meuse displays three fundamental characteristics: its *monotony*, its *abundance*, but also its *imbalance*'.¹⁶⁷ I agree in part with this judgment. The diet of the Brabançon troops was also monotonous, as it rested on the consumption of two or three staples, such as bread, the flesh of sheep or fish, and some supplementary foodstuffs. While the documents do not allow us to calculate the daily rations of the combatants, it seems that they were sufficiently well nourished. I can thus describe their diet as abundant. On the other hand, most of the studies on the nutrition of men-at-arms stress the major shortfall or even the total absence of fruit and vegetables.¹⁶⁸ It seems that this was not the case in Brabant. I cannot therefore describe the diet as unbalanced. In conclusion, I would like to quote Jean Froissart, who does not seem to have strayed too far from the truth when he wrote this description of the Brabançons:

Their army was well provisioned, having their lands behind them, and provisions reached them in abundance. This is the luxury of the Brabançons, that wherever they are and wherever they go, they wish to be swimming in wine and in food and comforts, or else they return home at once.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ AGR, CB, 3.081.

¹⁶⁴ AVB, *Boeck metten hare*, f. 76.

¹⁶⁵ Favresse, *L'avènement*, p. 175.

¹⁶⁶ DD, II, p. 566.

¹⁶⁷ Gaier, 'L'approvisionnement', pp. 556–7.

¹⁶⁸ Davies, 'Les rations', p. 141; Gaier, 'L'approvisionnement', p. 562.

¹⁶⁹ 'Et estoit leur ost rempli de tous biens, car ils avoient leurs pays derrière eulx et à tous costés, dont les pourvéances leur venoient largement et pleinement; et ce est l'aise des Brabançons, car où qu'ils soient et que ils vont, ils veulent estre en vins et en viandes et en délices jusques au col, ou tantost ils retourneroient en leurs maisons' (Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 163).

Orders and their transmission

A battle is a strange environment. The noise renders verbal communication difficult and the confusion often makes the dispatch of a messenger into the heart of the melee a chancy business. What is more, the same order might have to be transmitted to a large number of people. Hence, other means of transmission were used, based on audible or visible signals. The sources do not speak of the use of visible signals but it does not mean that they were never employed. During the suppression of the revolt of the weavers and the butchers in Brussels, the starting of a fire served as a signal to begin the counter-attack.¹⁷⁰ Among the audible signals, the sound of trumpets was most often used. They were blown to sound the call to arms and to take up formation. They announced the start of the attack, and their sound encouraged the combatants. At Leuven, just after the seizure of power by Couterreel, a score of archers kept the watch. They were equipped with horns so as to be able to sound the alarm.¹⁷¹

It is now time to speak of a problem that still troubles the Low Countries in our own times. The territories making up the traditional holdings of the duke were multilingual. The language of the majority of Brabant territory was Flemish, but French was spoken in the *Roman Pays* and German in the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse. As well as these three languages, Latin was in current use among the clergy and in the ducal chancellery. When the duke assembled an army of several hundred men originating from different parts of the duchy, or of the Low Countries, they had to be able to understand each other. While the passage describing the death of the count of Saint-Pol at the battle of Baesweiler because the adversary did not understand his language is probably fictitious, we know from elsewhere that this kind of incident was not uncommon in these regions.¹⁷² In the principality of Liège, the use by some of Flemish was not without its attendant difficulties. Hence, at the battle of Steppe, combatants on the same side were killed in error *propter confusionem Romanae linguae et Teotonicae*.¹⁷³ The ruler had to take account of this problem. In February 1425, John IV learned that Thomas (II), lord of Diest, one of the two captains of the army, had been hurt in falling from his horse and that Peter of Luxemburg, count of Conversan and the lord of Enghien, the second such, did not speak Flemish. Therefore, he sent the count of Nassau and John (II) of Schoonvorst to join him. These two individuals were able to express themselves in that tongue.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ DD, III, pp. 52–3.

¹⁷¹ AVL, 4.986 bis, f. 280–1 v.

¹⁷² *Annales Novesienses*, p. 589.

¹⁷³ *Annales Sancti Jacobi Leodiensis*, p. 670.

¹⁷⁴ DD, III, p. 443.

Reimbursements

The bulk of the expenses that the duke had to confront were not costs linked directly to the organisation of the expedition, but payments promised, and above all the reimbursement of the damages suffered in combat. This practice was already traditional, as in 1258, Alfonse of Castilla, king of the Romans, promised to indemnify the duke of Brabant and his men for the damages they might suffer in waging war against Richard, count of Cornwall, also styling himself king of the Romans.¹⁷⁵ At the start of the fourteenth century, the duke acted thus towards his own men-at-arms. This at least is my interpretation of the following episode. In 1312, John II received from Brussels indemnities for the horses that he and his men had lost at the battle of Vilvorde (1306).¹⁷⁶ If the duke gained this money, it is probable that he had already made reimbursements to the combatants under his orders. The system is better known for the later fourteenth century when indentures often contained a particular clause concerning losses and expenses. Promises of reimbursement were also made by the duke. In this wise, Wenceslas sent Desrame, bastard of Vertaing, to the abbey of Affligem, and promised him that:

All the costs and expenses they may suffer, whether by capture or by loss of their mounts, we will reimburse them on provision of a good account.¹⁷⁷

Habitually, the duke reimbursed for mounts lost during the expedition, equipment damaged in battle and the cost of ransom.¹⁷⁸ In certain cases, he also promised to indemnify losses of money,¹⁷⁹ tents,¹⁸⁰ armour or ransom of valets¹⁸¹ and even the costs following on illness.¹⁸²

The procedure for reimbursement was long and complex, especially when costs had to be paid to a large number of people. First of all, the combatants were reassembled by the marshal, his lieutenant or ducal functionaries so as to establish the total of their losses.¹⁸³ The sums due to them could be established on their good faith, on the strength of an oath on their honour (*op onsen ede*) and on sacred relics (*ten heiligen*).¹⁸⁴ Often an account of their expenses was demanded from the combatant (*par bon compte*).¹⁸⁵ The amounts thus deter-

¹⁷⁵ AGR, Mss div., 5/B, f. 329 v.; CC, 1, f. 3 v.; CC, 10, f. 395 v.

¹⁷⁶ BY, I, p. 750.

¹⁷⁷ 'Tous cous et frais que il soustenra ou avoir pora tant en prise de son corps comme en pertes de chevaux nous len deliverons et renderons si avant quil le pora monstrier par bon compte' (AGR, CB, 927).

¹⁷⁸ AGR, CB, 5.266.

¹⁷⁹ AGR, CB, 1.211 or 1.230.

¹⁸⁰ AGR, CB, 1.230.

¹⁸¹ AGR, CB, 1.211.

¹⁸² AGR, CB, 1.465.

¹⁸³ AGR, CB, 1.010, 2.127–2.128, 2.604–2.617, 2.933, etc.

¹⁸⁴ AGR, CB, 3.167, 3.178–4.610; De Raadt, 'La bataille', 17, pp. 310–11.

¹⁸⁵ AGR, CB, 981. Some of these accounts have survived: the account of the seigneur de Gommegnies following a *chevauchée* in Alsace in 1365 (AGR, CB, 2.312) and the statement of sums due to John of Gronsveld for the costs of the siege of Reifferscheid in 1385 (Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–2).

mined were listed in a *scadeboek*, which would serve as reference for the reimbursements.¹⁸⁶ Two of these books have survived, one for the war of the succession of Brabant¹⁸⁷ and one for the *chevauchée* of Jülich.¹⁸⁸ The duke then acknowledged himself responsible for this sum and set the terms of reimbursement.¹⁸⁹ This document was important. In 1397, the 240 *vieilles mailles* demanded by Michel of Ligne, lord of Thumaide, for services done by his late father, were not paid to him by the duchess, as the claimant could produce no letter proving that the money was due to him.¹⁹⁰ The receivers dealt with the distribution.¹⁹¹ Generally, the leaders of *route* would receive the money and then dispense it to those among their followers who were owed.¹⁹² These reimbursements might take a very long time and patience was required. The first settlement concerning Baesweiler dates from 6 May 1372,¹⁹³ but in 1418, forty-six years later, there were still arguments about certain indemnities arising from that battle.¹⁹⁴ Once reimbursed, a man-at-arms would then give the duke a letter in which he declared himself satisfied.¹⁹⁵

When the duke did not dispose of the necessary funds, he had recourse to various expedients to satisfy his creditors. In 1374, Henry (I), lord of Gronsveld, received a life annuity of 250 *vieux écus* as payment of his expenses for Baesweiler and of other debts.¹⁹⁶ In 1385, Joan acted in the same way towards John (II), lord of Gronsveld because of his expenses for the siege of Reifferscheid.¹⁹⁷ In 1388, to Scheiffart of Merode, *drossard* in the lands of Millen, Gangelt and Waldfeucht, she promised not to deprive him of possession of these three castles before having reimbursed the costs that he and his friends had suffered during the second war of Guelders.¹⁹⁸ Even more extreme measures were sometimes applied. In 1356, Wenceslas authorised the lord of Celles to reimburse himself for the sum of 100 old *écus*, which he had lost in his service, from all the Brabançons who had taken the enemy's part during the war, wherever he could find them.¹⁹⁹ Of course, all these expedients were an emergency solution, inapplicable on a large scale. When the sums to be reimbursed were too great, an extraordinary aid was usually voted by the Estates, as in 1356, in

¹⁸⁶ AGR, CB, 5.316; De Raadt, 'La bataille', 17, pp. 312–13.

¹⁸⁷ AGR, CC, 50.344/50.345; Blockmans, 'De erfstrijd', pp. 13–15; Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 28–31.

¹⁸⁸ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 8–18. In an act of 1415, reference is made to another *scadeboek* kept at Brussels. This latter register was probably the same as that mentioned by Dickstein-Bernard and does not concern the battle of Baesweiler (AGR, CB, 7.951; Dickstein-Bernard, *La gestion*, pp. 117–18).

¹⁸⁹ AGR, CB, 932, 938, 939, etc.

¹⁹⁰ AGR, CB, 7.032.

¹⁹¹ AGR, CB, 1.346.

¹⁹² AGR, CB, 959, 961, 1.138, 1.188, etc.

¹⁹³ AGR, CB, 2.911.

¹⁹⁴ AGR, CC 11, f. 340 v.

¹⁹⁵ AGR, CB, 1.182, 1.192, etc.

¹⁹⁶ AGR, CB, 3.159.

¹⁹⁷ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 119–21.

¹⁹⁸ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 135–9, 185–8.

¹⁹⁹ AGR, CB, 929.

1372–74 or in 1390.²⁰⁰ The duke had a vested interest in reimbursing his men-at-arms if he wished to benefit from their service in any future expedition. This was not the only reason that led him to act thus, however. Rason of Linter, who suffered losses in the course of the second war of Guelders, was a creditor to the duchess Joan for the sum of 1,605 old *écus*. Not having been paid by the date set, he sued for damages, which were eventually paid to him in 1408 by Anthony. This indemnity amounted to 1,000 old *écus*, that is, two-thirds of the original debt.²⁰¹ The situation might grow even worse. When the duke was slow to fulfil his financial obligations, certain creditors were sometimes tempted to reimburse themselves from the goods of their debtor. So, the men-at-arms who had served under the orders of Thierry of Heinsberg during the war of the succession of Brabant and who were still waiting for their money attacked some Brabançon merchants in 1363.²⁰² In 1393, it was the turn of Renaud of Fauquemont to reimburse himself by attacking the inhabitants of 's Hertogenbosch.²⁰³ In these circumstances, it is not surprising to see the Estates grant an aid to the duke, as it was the towns that had most to lose in this situation.

We must also note that the duke reimbursed not only his men-at-arms, but also the messengers or ambassadors captured in his service. In 1356, the two ambassadors sent to seek help from Edward III were captured by a pirate while crossing the Channel and freed in exchange for a ransom. Joan would grant the sum of 3,000 *vieux écus* to Gerard van der Heiden, lord of Boutersem, to indemnify him for the losses suffered in her service.²⁰⁴ The ambassadors sent to France on this occasion benefited from the same favourable treatment.²⁰⁵

The structure of the army

The glaive or the lance

In the Brabançon archives, the strength of a *route* was often counted in terms of the *glavie* or the *panchier*.²⁰⁶ The first of these units was made up of *enen man van wapen met tween goeden perden*²⁰⁷ and the second was *enen panchiere ende*

²⁰⁰ The aid of 1356 amounted to 450,000 *écus* while the total reimbursements mentioned in the *scadeboek* are 261,000 *écus*. Since the latter sum represents only part of the duke's expenses, we can see the exorbitant cost of warfare (Mattheessens, 'Het leger', p. 103). After Baesweiler, the situation would worsen. The aid amounted to only 900,000 *moutons* while the reimbursements are estimated at more than 1,200,000 *moutons* (Uyttebrouck, *Le gouvernement*, I, pp. 71–2).

²⁰¹ AGR, CC, 15.717, II, f. 35.

²⁰² AGR, CB, 2.079–2.080, 2.085, 2.461.

²⁰³ AGR, CB, 5.643; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 347.

²⁰⁴ AGR, CB, 911, 913, 925, 1.503, 1.698, 1.773, 2.196.

²⁰⁵ AGR, CB, 924; Galesloot, 'Acte', p. 23.

²⁰⁶ AGR, CB, 936, 1.073 or 1.185.

²⁰⁷ AGR, CB, 1.173. Note that during the second half of the fourteenth century the *man van wapen* signified exclusively a heavily armed cavalryman as opposed to any other kind of combatant.

mit enen perde.²⁰⁸ The *glavie* was thus a combatant possessing two horses while the *panchier* had only one mount available. The first received twice the pay of the second.²⁰⁹ A note in the *scadeboek* specifies that each combatant be equipped with two horses, two swords and one set of armour.²¹⁰ We are thus dealing with the *lance* or the *glavie* of French sources.²¹¹ The *lance* or *hasta* of two horses was relatively rare elsewhere; it usually counted for three or four horses.²¹² In Brabant also, a *lance* might count for three horses, but this was very much an exception.²¹³ In a *glavie* of two horses, only the man-at-arms was counted as a combatant. The second horse was ridden by a squire who did not take part in the battle. Only when dealing with three or more horses do we count not only the man-at-arms, the leader of the *lance*, but also a *panchier* or a mounted archer.²¹⁴

The word *panchier*, used both in Flemish and in French, means a cuirass. This combatant was also a heavy cavalryman and fought in the same way. Since the basic unit in Brabant was the *lance* of two horses, the *panchiers* were a minority in these regions. In the documents concerning the war of the succession of Brabant, we find only nine such among two hundred and thirty-nine *glavies*. In 1371, not one *panchier* appears in the accounts for the expedition to Heinsberg. The same is true of the acts relating to the *chevauchée* of Jülich. Nonetheless, the great difference we find in the ransoms, which varied between 20 and 18,000 *moutons*, or in the indemnities show that the heavy cavalry was not homogeneous. This may suggest the tacit presence of *panchiers* or of other horsemen of lesser status and fortunes.

It is important to indicate that the terms just cited sometimes have different meanings. In an account of 1385, the *lance* was also an accounting unit as two crossbowmen were counted as one *lance*.²¹⁵ The *glavie* did not always designate a group of several horses. The term was sometimes used in a general way to mean any heavy cavalryman.²¹⁶ We must thus be cautious when reading the documents, especially when we are trying to estimate the size of an army.

²⁰⁸ AGR, CB, 1.234.

²⁰⁹ In 1356–57, the pay was one old *écu* per day for one *glavie* and one half *écu* per day for a *panchier* (AGR, CB, 1.233–1.242).

²¹⁰ AGR, CC, 50.344/50.345, f. 89 v.

²¹¹ In France, in the middle of the fourteenth century, the *lance*, the *glavie* and the *armure de fer* corresponded to two mounted men of whom only one was a combatant (Contamine, *La guerre*, p. 243).

²¹² In France, during the 1380s, there was a transition from the two-man to the three-man *lance* (Schulze, *Die Gleve*, pp. 39–46; Contamine, *La guerre*, p. 243).

²¹³ Prims, 'Rekeningen . . . 1393–1398', pp. 119–20; Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 361.

²¹⁴ Schulze, *Die Gleve*, pp. 40–6; Lot, *L'art*, II, p. 210.

²¹⁵ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 121–2.

²¹⁶ Schulze, *Die Gleve*, pp. 79–80; Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 15.

The route

An army was thus made up of small troops called *rotte*²¹⁷ or *hoep*²¹⁸ whose unity was symbolised by a banner and a war cry. Elsewhere, the Flemish term of *conroet* was in used.²¹⁹ They are the basic tactical unit of the medieval army, its strength being counted as a few tens of soldiers only. I decline to regard the *route* as 'above all an administrative unit' as Balon would have it.²²⁰ The terms *rotte* and *route* derive from the low-Latin *rupta*, which means band or troop.²²¹ The word *hoep* is of Germanic origin but has the same sense as *rupta*. These words are synonyms in the archives, as, for example, the troop of John (II) of Polanen, lord of La Leck and Breda, was described by either term indifferently.²²² The *route* in Brabant should not be confused with the French *bannière*.²²³ We have seen already that the status of the *baenrotschen* was different from that of the knights banneret and that they had never played a particular military role. Furthermore, in the acts concerning Baesweiler, absolutely nothing distinguishes the *route* of *baenrotschen* from those of other Brabançon lords, ducal officers or simple knights. The *route* was instead similar to the French *montre*²²⁴ or to the *conroi*.²²⁵ The *montre* was a troop of horsemen that a knight, be he banneret or not, or a squire brought with him for a military campaign. Their number was mentioned in his indenture and, in the accounting documents, their names appeared under his own. It was above all a human group with some social reality, a group of combatants who almost always had a common geographical and feudal origin. The leader of the group was the one with highest social standing, who had taken the initiative in forming the *route*.²²⁶ The descriptions of *route* given by Jacques de Hemricourt at the end of the fourteenth century also bring to light the organic connections that united the various combatants in these units. They were often members of the same lineage united behind the most important member of the family, or else vassals following the banner of their overlord.²²⁷

This was also the case in Brabant. *Routes* were described by the name of their leader, both in the *scadeboek* for Baesweiler and in the settlements. Also, there clearly existed a hierarchy between the leader of the *route* and the other men-at-arms that made it up. The documents show that a *route* was formed by *helper und dyner*²²⁸ and that all these individuals were under the orders of the leader of the *route*. The helpers (*helper*) were men-at-arms of a status or rank comparable to the leader of the *route*. These might be members of his family, or

²¹⁷ The term *rotte* was used indifferently in both Flemish and in French (AGR, CB, 2.855).

²¹⁸ AGR, CB, 955.

²¹⁹ VH, p. 316. Some authors use this term in the general sense of 'troop' (BY, I, p. 527).

²²⁰ Balon, 'L'organisation', p. 21.

²²¹ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 84.

²²² AVL 6.486 f. 2, 42 v.

²²³ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 155 et seq.

²²⁴ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 79–81.

²²⁵ Verbruggen, 'La tactique', pp. 163–4.

²²⁶ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 80.

²²⁷ Gaier, *Art*, pp. 185, 272–4.

²²⁸ AGR, CB, 3.153, 5.135.

friends.²²⁹ They were sometimes called companions (*gheselle*) and formed the company (*gheselscape*) of the leader of the *route*.²³⁰ The servants (*dynere*) were combatants occupying an inferior position, such as vassals or men-at-arms engaged by the leader of the *route*.²³¹ The number of men forming a *route* varied according to the power and wealth of the leader. In the army of Baesweiler, we find some with only three or four men and others with more than 170.²³² Sometimes, larger *routes* seem to have been made up of a combination of *routes* of smaller size.

Thanks to this type of unit, it was relatively easy to organise an army in a battle because each man-at-arms had his place already among his relatives or neighbours, under the banner of the leader of his *route*. It was enough to give each leader a precise station on the battlefield in order for all his companions to follow him. This gives us a better understanding of how armies of some thousands of men could be rapidly mobilised in an era when means of communications were very rudimentary.

The battle

The battle (*cohortus*, *scaren*, *bataelgen*) was the largest unit in combat. It was made up of a variable number of *routes* and its strength, depending on the size of the army, could exceed a thousand men-at-arms. According to the strategy of the period, we generally count three battles: the vanguard, the main body and the rearguard or the reserve. At Baesweiler, the formation was simpler. The duke divided his army into two battles, the main battle being commanded by himself and the count of Saint-Pol. Robert of Namur was left in the rear with a second troop, charged with securing the rear against any enemy manoeuvre. This was the rearguard or reserve.²³³ During the revolt of the trades in Brussels (1360), the patricians divided their forces into four small battles. Each of these had a well-defined tactical objective.²³⁴

The commanders named at the head of these large units, under whose banner all the leaders of *route*, Brabançons and foreigners, were to form up, were important and prestigious individuals. Such a choice no doubt served to avoid rivalry and maintain discipline in the battle. Most of the time the allocation of commanders appears to have been made on the eve of battle itself. Certain lords might be given a specific station in the army. In 1418, John, lord of Wezemaal was at the head of the army because he was the hereditary marshal of Brabant.²³⁵ In the same year, the lord of Grimbergen, *ex officio sibi*, was responsible for the rearguard.²³⁶ Since the battle of Worringen, it was the lords of Grimbergen that had the honour of commanding the reserve.²³⁷

²²⁹ AGR, CB, 2.855.

²³⁰ AGR, CB, 4.667.

²³¹ AGR, CB, 1.721–1.722, 2.165, 3.175, 6.441, 6.714.

²³² Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', annexe, p. 19.

²³³ BY, II, p. 201; Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 21–3; *Chronique liégeoise de 1402*, p. 357.

²³⁴ DD, III, pp. 52–3, 570.

²³⁵ DD, III, p. 373.

²³⁶ DD, III, p. 373.

²³⁷ VH, p. LV; De Smet, *Mémoire*, p. 25.

An organisation based on the *glaive*, the *route* and the battle reflects the feudal structure of the army. It was also a consequence of the administrative processes in its formations, such as fief-rente and the indenture. The militia contingents were formed in an entirely different manner. Unfortunately the silence of the sources does not allow us to know whether a contingent of the militia was included in a large troop, or whether, since they fought on foot, they were simply formed into an auxiliary unit making no part of the structure we have just described, which would apply only to men-at-arms.

The company

In an act dated by Verkooren to the year 1366, mention is made of men-at-arms at the duke's service to the number of twenty compagnies (*geleyen*):

Therefore I would ask you in friendship not to fail in this and that you should conduct the company which will come to Rolduc to XX at the cost of one night when they arrive and also the cost of one night when they return to Rolduc, as I wish to reimburse you this cost . . .²³⁸

According to the archivist, the term *geleyen* seems to translate as company. I am unconvinced by this interpretation. To begin with, only this document speaks of such a unit. It has no place in the classic structure of the army of Brabant (*lance*, *route*, battle). Then again, in the accounting documents, the *glaive* was used to enumerate a troop of combatants. It thus seems that the company did not exist in Brabant and that *geleyen* should be read as *gelavie*, that is to say, *glaive*.

²³⁸ 'Dair umb soe bicten ich uch vruntlichen dat irs niet en laest ir en duet den gesellen die zo Rode comen sullen zu XX geleyen zu den cost eyne naycht alsy daer comen ind ouch duet un den cost eynen naecht alsij widerumb comen ze Rode, want ich uch den cost rechenen wille . . .' (AGR, CB, 2.421; Verkooren, *Chartes . . . Brabant*, IV, p. 228).

12

Military Obligations and Contracts

Forms of military service in the Middle Ages

Introduction

When a ruler decided to muster his army, three different types of troops were distinguished by their mode of recruitment. These were the vassals and all those bound to feudal service; those persons obliged to take up arms in the case of a general levy or obligatory service; and volunteers, foreign or domestic, engaged by contract. Therefore, these armies were very varied in both their mode of recruitment and in the geographical and social origins of those who served in them. To understand better the variation, we must consider in turn the forms of military service and the different types of contract in use at the time. This approach is not as simple as it might seem. The forms of military service in the Middle Ages were varied and are still poorly defined. Although the majority of general works on medieval institutions make a clear distinction between the *ost* and the *chevauchée*, the definitions that they offer are often simplistic, even erroneous. Poor comprehension of the context or the sense of certain words has led to some misunderstandings. The specialised studies bearing on this theme are to be treated with caution, as the diversity of customs is such that the precise sense of the words varies from region to region.¹ For the county of Flanders, there is the excellent work of Verbruggen.² As this was a neighbouring principality to Brabant, I shall review the conclusions of this study:

The *chevauchée*³ originally signified a military obligation only for the vassals. Later, this service would be extended to include all the subjects of the ruler. It was a military expedition of small importance and of short duration, requiring the services of a small number of combatants.

The *ost*⁴ was an offensive expedition in which participated part of the military forces of the principality by virtue of the *bannum*.

¹ Balon, 'L'organisation', pp. 8–11; Lot and Fawtier, *Histoire*, II, p. 514; Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 46–8; Jansen and Hoppenbrouwers, 'Military', pp. 1–24.

² Verbruggen, 'De militaire dienst in het graafschap Vlaanderen'.

³ Also called *Caballatio*, *cavalcata*, *chivalteia*, *chevaucheia*, *equitatio*, *equitatus*, *equitatura*, *equitatus equitum*, *resiae*, *chevauchée*, *chevauchié*, *cevaucié*, *reyse*, *reese*, *rese*.

⁴ Also called *Hostilitas*, *hostis*, *expeditio*, *exercitus*, *host*, *ost*, *os*, *herevaerd*, *hervard*, *herevarde*.

The general *ost*⁵ was of the same nature as the *ost*, but a larger number took part.

The *arrière-ban*⁶ was a complement to the *ost* and the general *ost*. The ruler called upon the *arrière-ban* when the *ost* or general *ost* proved insufficient. In this case, everyone had to support the war effort. The *arrière-ban* could thus have an offensive nature, contrary to the writings of certain authors.⁷

The defence of the territory⁸ in which all able-bodied men were called upon. There is no mention anywhere of any exemption from this service. On the contrary, it was specified that even with an exemption from the service of the *ost* or the *chevauchée*, the *landweer* was still obligatory.

Traditional definitions for the duchy

For Brabant, there are some classic definitions that I consider incomplete or false. According to Wauters, there were only two forms of warfare:

The *chevauchée*, which was a simple call to arms, for which the duke demanded the service of only a certain number of his vassals.

The *ost*, which took place only for the defence of the realm, obligatory for all, except with the permission of the duke or one of his officers.⁹

Most authors propose similar definitions.¹⁰ Willems contrasts the *chevauchée* to the war of nation against nation (*volcwyh*).¹¹ I have not found such a concept in the other sources at my disposal and it is very likely that Jan van Heelu used such a word only for reasons of style. Van Oeteren attempts to correct them and approaches the problem in a novel fashion:

The *chevauchée* would be a military expedition organised in diverse circumstances and for various reasons. It would apparently take place entirely outside the borders of the duchy or in isolated parts of the domain in the midst of foreign holdings. It often showed a markedly aggressive character and involved only a part of the population available for mobilisation, even when a general levy took place at the same time.

The *ost* would be a general mobilisation of all the inhabitants of the duchy for the defence of the ducal domain. In these circumstances, those called upon would have to serve at their own expense. Some could avoid service in exchange for paying a tax.¹²

As I do not agree with all these authors, let us examine the different texts at our disposal. For this, we will have to step back to the thirteenth century, an era in which the duke and his subjects were still careful to specify their respective obligations in their documents.

⁵ Also called *Generalis expeditio*, *generalis hostilitas*, *communis guerra*, *were commune*, *os commune*, *os bannie*, *banie*.

⁶ Also called *Retrobannum*.

⁷ Guilhaermoz, *Essai*, pp. 293–4.

⁸ Also called *Defensio terrae*, *deffencion de le terre*, *lantweer*, *lantwere*.

⁹ Wauters, *Le duc*, p. 328.

¹⁰ Van Zinnicq-Bergman, *Het voormalig*, pp. 194–6.

¹¹ VH, pp. LI, 49, 197, 253.

¹² Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 63–79.

The *chevauchée*

Certain documents display the peculiarities of the service of the *chevauchée*. The most important is the charter of Grimbergen (1292) in which the respective rights of John I and of certain Brabançon lords are defined:

It is to be understood that at the moment when the duke summons us the lord of Grimbergen or our men to common war or to *chevauchée*, so shall we the lord of Grimbergen help our lord the duke in common war at our own cost and in the *chevauchée* at his own expense, according to our power as he asks of us.¹³

Participation in the *chevauchée* (*chevauchien*) and the general *ost* (*ghemeyne oorloge*) was thus obligatory for the lords de Grimbergen each time the duke called upon them. The *chevauchée* took place at the duke's own expense, unlike the general *ost*. This difference is also found in the alliance agreed between John I and Guy of Dampierre (1291):

It is to be understood that in all tasks (. . .) we will aid, counsel and comfort each other loyally, with or without arms, in the host or the *chevauchée* (. . .) and should it happen that one of us help the other in the host, this will not be at the expense of the one who is helped, and if one helps the other in the *chevauchée*, the one who is helped will pay the expense.¹⁴

The charter of Grimbergen is a unique document. It does not allow us to establish all those subject to a similar obligation but it would be most surprising if only the individuals mentioned in the act were thus bound. Two contemporary documents complement our fragmentary knowledge. In 1286, a certain *W* was subjected to a fine by Henry Leuken, *amman* of Brussels, for not having taken part, as he should.¹⁵ In 1307, John II acknowledged that the high and the low justice for Mont-Saint-Guibert and Dion belonged to the abbot of Gembloux, but he retained certain rights over these two villages, including that of the *chevauchiés*.¹⁶ The *chevauchée* was thus obligatory for certain classes of individuals, poorly defined but probably including the vassals of the duke.

Van Oeteren muses:

Was this obligation [to take part in a *chevauchée*] still necessary or useful, when the service was undertaken at the ruler's expense? What role or function could

¹³ 'Dat is te verstaene welck tijt dat ons heren van Grimbergen oft onse knaepen de hertoghe ontboet om ghemeyne oorloge oft om chevauchien soo selen wy heren van Grimbergen onsen heere den hertoghen hulpen te ghemeynen oorloge op onsen kost ende te chevautie op sijnen eygen kost maer onse macht gelijck hy dat ons ontbiet' (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, pp. 129–30).

¹⁴ 'C'est a savoir ke en toutes les besoingnes (. . .) nous aiderons, conseillerons et conforterons loialement l'un l'autre, a armes et sans armes, par ost et par chevauchie, ensi comme chius de nous ki besoing en ara en requerra l'autre (. . .) et s'il avient ke aucuns de nous fait aiuwe à l'autre par host che sera sans le frait de celui qui on aidera, et se on fait aiuwe par chevauchie, chis qui on aidera pourverra et estoftera le chevauchie a son frait' (VH, pp. 449–51, 540–1).

¹⁵ AGR, CR, 2.602.

¹⁶ BY, I, pp. 744–5.

such an obligation have at a time when (. . .) the spread of paid service opened up new possibilities of recruitment?¹⁷

I believe that I can reply in the affirmative to this question. In the present case, I may assume that it was the obligation to follow the duke that allowed Anthony to assemble rapidly the troops that followed him at Agincourt. If he had had to recruit paid combatants, this would surely have taken more time.

The *ost*

As we have just seen, according to the charter of Grimbergen (1292), vassals had to take part in the *ost*. Several charters of privilege mention a similar obligation for the townspeople. For example, in the *keure* of Brussels (1292):

Item we have also promised that, when the host is summoned in our lands and our people go together, none shall stay at home without our having given them permission verbally or by our *amman* of Brussels.¹⁸

The same went for the other towns of the duchy such as Nivelles (1292),¹⁹ Malines²⁰ or 's Hertogenbosch (1330).²¹ The *ost* was thus obligatory and those called up had probably to serve at their own expense. The *ost* closely resembled a general levy of the inhabitants of the duchy. Hence there would be no difference in Brabant between the *ost*, general *ost* and the *arrière-ban*. In theory, no one could avoid it without formal leave from the duke or one of his officers.

The defence of the *pays*

The defence of the realm was a special case among military operations. Edmond de Dynter does not hesitate to write that the people of the duchy were ready to die for the defence of the right of their lord and of their country.²² When the duke granted certain freedoms to one of his towns, he often took care to remind them that they still owed him military service for the defence of the *pays*. This was the case for Léau²³ and for Diest.²⁴ More generally, in his testament of 1261, Henry III promised not to demand the service of his towns save for the defence of *terra nostra*.²⁵ When defending his territory, the duke thus had recourse to a general levy. In theory, every male between the ages of twenty and sixty, approximately, was subject to the mobilisation.²⁶ The practice was very different. Exemptions

¹⁷ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 78–9.

¹⁸ 'Item oic hebben wij geloofte wanneer dat men hervaert ghebiedt in onsen landen ende onse liede gemeinlic uutvaren, dat niemant thuys en blive wy en gheven's hem zelve oorlof met onzen monde ocht onse amman van Bruessele' (VH, p. 548).

¹⁹ VH, p. 554.

²⁰ DD, II, p. 479.

²¹ BY, I, pp. 781–6.

²² 'Parati pro jure sui domini et patrie deffendione vivere atque mori . . .' (DD, II, p. 558).

²³ 'Ad defensionem terre stabunt . . .' (Martens, 'Recueil', pp. 368–9).

²⁴ 'Defensionem terrae suae . . .' (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 94; De Sturler, 'Un fief', pp. 156–7).

²⁵ Boland, 'Le testament', pp. 93–6.

²⁶ Gaier, with the help of more recent sources, estimated that the age of those called up varied from 15–21 to 55–60 years. Balon is of the same opinion (Gaier, 'Analysis', p. 241; Balon, 'L'organisation', p. 32).

were common and only a limited number would take up arms in these circumstances. The temporary absence, even for a short time, of the greater part of the duchy's manpower would have had too grave an impact on the economic and social life of Brabant.

There are many examples of general mobilisation in the second half of the fourteenth century. An obvious example is at the time of the two Flemish invasions of 1356. During the first war of Guelders, the duke had *soyner les cloyches par tout notre pays de Brabant*.²⁷ Again, in the second war of Guelders, Joan twice ordered a general mobilisation, in 1386²⁸ and in 1388.²⁹ The same was true for the third war in 1398.³⁰

Local mobilisations

Local mobilisations were obviously more numerous than general mobilisations. The defence of the duchy, which should have concerned the whole nation, did not necessarily imply a general levy of all the men of an age to serve. This would not be done save when the attacker was sufficiently powerful to present a serious threat. In contrast, local mobilisations were particularly frequent in vulnerable areas, such as 's Hertogenbosch.³¹ The special nature of these local levies was that they took place at the duke's expense. At least, this is implied by a ducal order to the receiver of Limburg on 25 July 1371.³² This explains why, when the duchy was threatened by a small force, the duke did not want to have recourse to a general levy.

Private and public warfare

It is important to make a clear distinction between "public war" and "private war" (*expeditionibus nostris, cavalcaturi publicis*).³³ In the Middle Ages, private wars were frequent and often disturbed the public peace. I shall not deal here with the private wars carried on by families, clans or towns.³⁴ I shall concern myself only with the duke who like all other lords had the legitimate right to undertake a personal war. While he was free to undertake a private military expedition, he could not hope to receive the help of the *pays*. Already at the end of the thirteenth century, John I was forced to give a letter of non-prejudice to the *noble homme, chevalier, bourgeois, et tout nostre homme de nostre terre de Brabant* who had followed him at their own expense during the war of the succession of

²⁷ AGR, CB, 2.371.

²⁸ DD, III, p. 113.

²⁹ DD, III, p. 123.

³⁰ Prims, 'Rekeningen . . . 1393–1398', p. 110; DD, III, p. 135.

³¹ Kerremans, *Etude*, p. 217.

³² AGR, CB, 2.866 bis.

³³ A curious text of 1336 probably makes reference to these ideas, but the vocabulary used is perplexing: '(. . .) in expeditionibus nostris et cavalcaturi publicis, cum nos aut successores nostros guerram apertam habere contigerit, sine dolo, que vulgariter guerre ouverte nuncupantur . . .' (Erens, *De oorkonden*, III, p. 349).

³⁴ Favresse, *L'avènement*, pp. 161–5, 198–9; Smolar-Meynart, 'Les guerres privées et la cour des apaiseurs à Bruxelles au moyen âge'; Godding, 'La "keure" bruxelloise de 1229'; de Raadt, 'Une "paix du sang" relative au meurtre de Philippe van der Elst (1402)'.

Limburg, a conflict that had nothing to do with the destiny of Brabant.³⁵ The same would go for Joan and Wenceslas. Article ten of their *Joyeuse Entrée* is clear. The duke and the duchess had no right to declare war in the general sense (*orloghe*) without the consent of their subjects.³⁶ Similarly, article twenty-four of the same document specifies that the conquests made by the duke during a *ghemeyne orloghe ocht met ghemeynen heere van onsen lande van Brabant* would become part of the duchy and not part of the ducal domain.³⁷ The duke could not therefore increase his personal holdings by means of public warfare. These two extracts do not imply that the Estates tried to control all the ruler's military activities, as van Oeteren holds.³⁸ They only determined when and with what consequences the country would find itself embroiled in a conflict. The duke remained entirely free to carry out private expeditions, which did not concern the country, and he did so on several occasions. The *chevauchée* of Jülich or the participation of Anthony in the quarrels of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians are good examples thereof. The powers of the Estates in this sphere are much greater than they might seem. In 1407, Anthony, wishing to renew the war against Renaud IV, duke of Guelders and of Jülich, assembled them and demanded the service of the *ost*. As he did not explain his intentions sufficiently clearly, they refused to grant him their support. The duke set off in any case, and the war that he had hoped to make "public" was in fact no more than "private".³⁹

Classical vassalage

The obligations of a vassal: the theory

To become a vassal was an important decision. On entering the feudal pyramid, the newcomer changed his personal status by joining a hierarchy in which he would often not occupy the higher position. Henceforward he would be bound by many obligations. The vassal promised his suzerain respect, obedience and fidelity. He undertook to assist him in his military expeditions, to advise him and to do nothing that could bring him harm, that is to say, to make no attempt on his life, to form no pacts with his enemies and to betray none of the secrets of his deliberations. In the texts, all these obligations are laconically termed 'counsel and aid' (*consilium et auxilium, suit and service, raad en bede*). Counsel was both political and judicial, just as aid was both financial and military. Assistance was mutual, as the suzerain undertook to help his vassal and to protect him if need be. At the outset, the aid that might be asked for was unlimited. The vassal had to obey his suzerain in all the tasks that might be given him. Rapidly, the extent and nature of these services came to be specified. In the case of military service, there would be agreement on the time within which to join the army, the number of followers that should accompany the vassal, the quality and quantity of the equip-

³⁵ VH, pp. L–LI.

³⁶ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 99.

³⁷ Van Bragt, *De Blijde*, p. 103.

³⁸ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 71–2.

³⁹ Boffa, 'L'expédition', pp. 300–1.

ment and the horses to be used, and the period, usually forty days, for which the service was free and obligatory. After that time, if the suzerain wished to keep the combatants in arms, he would have to pay them wages.⁴⁰ Certain vassals sought for exemptions from offensive expeditions and to limit their obligations to defensive warfare. In the end, many preferred to buy off their service by paying a contribution towards the *ost* (*scutagium*). This development was complete by the end of the twelfth century. In the following century, the military obligations of vassals represented no more than a minor contribution. The process was linked to the growth in paid service, as the ruler no longer possessed other means to obtain combatants.

The vassals of the duke: the practice

The number of vassals of the dukes can be estimated from their fief books.⁴¹ Based on the *Latijnsboek*, Pirenne counts 3,000 of them for the middle of the fourteenth century.⁴² Van Oeteren holds that the *Spechtboek*, begun around 1374 and updated from then until the start of the fifteenth century, contains a larger number of vassals, varying between 3,000 and 4,000.⁴³ Not all of them were men-at-arms and the number of vassals in the duke's service was thus smaller than these estimates. There is however no doubt that all the great fief holders were obliged to serve him. This was the case for Florent Berthout, lord of Malines. In 1312, he declared that he held in fief all the rights that he possessed over Malines and its environs. He recognised that he was bound to the duke's service; that he had to lead, in his armies, the people of Malines and all his other peoples except for those of Necherspoel and of Nieuwland; and that he owed the duke all the assistance in his power against all comers, at his expense and the expense of his people.⁴⁴ The same went for the *messnilide*, those individuals of unfree origins but who now were parts of the duke's entourage, his *familia*. They obtained many advantages thereby, but in return they had to serve their master militarily. Their obligations were greater than those of the townspeople. This is why, in 1371, while the militiamen of Leuven did not take part in the *chevauchée* of Jülich, they followed the duke.⁴⁵ For the same reason they were sometimes included with the vassals in documents,⁴⁶ and, according to their possessions, they had to fight either on foot or mounted.⁴⁷

It is possible that the number of followers who accompanied a vassal in combat was proportional to the size of his fief. So at least concludes

⁴⁰ Boutruche, *Seigneurie*, II, pp. 192–201.

⁴¹ This concerns the *Latijnsboek* (AGR, CF, 1), *Stootboek* (AGR, CF, 2), *Spechtboek* (AGR, CF, 4) and *Casselboek* (AGR, CC, 542). See Bril, 'Les premiers registres féodaux de Brabant'; De Nave, 'Het register van denombrementen van leengoederen genaamd 'Spechtboek' en zijn kopie'.

⁴² Galesloot, *Le livre des feudataires de Jean III*; Pirenne, *Histoire*, II, p. 13.

⁴³ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', p. 245.

⁴⁴ AGR, Mss div., 1, f. 109; Mss div., 5 bis, f. 16; CC, 1, f. 43; CC, 2, f. 11; CC, 9, f. 12 v.

⁴⁵ Boonen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 38–9, 229–30.

⁴⁶ Bolsée, *La grande*, p. XXIX.

⁴⁷ Calbrecht, *De oorsprong*, pp. 50–2; Piot, 'Deux nouvelles enquêtes faites en 1363 et 1389 sur la conduite des fonctionnaires au duché de Brabant'.

Mattheessens by analysis of the acts of 1338–39.⁴⁸ I am not entirely convinced by his argument, as the documents are too rare for such a conclusion to be drawn from them. At the start of the fourteenth century, a vassal still owed free service to the duke, at least for a given period.⁴⁹ Mattheessens holds that this was still the case during the war of the succession of Brabant, the war against Waleran of Fauquemont and the *chevauchée* of Jülich.⁵⁰ I have not been able to determine the period for which a vassal had to serve at his own expense. In the neighbouring states, this period was often forty days.⁵¹ It is therefore probable that the same was true of Brabant. However, let us note that in the duchy of Limburg, in 1394, the period of free service was a mere fifteen days.⁵²

When a vassal did not fulfil his military obligations, he was subjected to a fine.⁵³ Some more important individuals often possessed fiefs scattered among several principalities. This did not allow them to escape their obligations. In a treaty concluded between Wenceslas and Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault and Holland, to guarantee peace between their respective lands and subjects, it was clearly indicated that each of them could, no matter the circumstances, demand military service from men who held fiefs in the lands of the other.⁵⁴ At times, a vassal might find himself in a delicate position, particularly if two of his lords were at war. Since neutrality was difficult to maintain, he would have to choose a side, with all the attendant risks. During the war of the succession of Brabant, many individuals resigned their fiefs or homage towards Louis of Male so as to fight alongside Wenceslas and Joan.⁵⁵ Others acted similarly so as to join the side of the count of Flanders.⁵⁶ In general, the situation was resolved at the end of the conflict. In peace treaties, reference was often made to a return to the possession of fiefs as they had been before the hostilities.⁵⁷ We find a particularly interesting clause in an act from the start of the fifteenth century. The townspeople of Antwerp, be they vassals of any lord, did not have the right to perform their service as vassals except when the town took part in a common war (*gemeynen orloge*). In this case, the townsman-vassal had the right to choose whether to march under the banner of his lord, or to follow the militia of the town.⁵⁸ Being a townsman won out over being a vassal for obvious economic reasons. Other townspeople might have had to suffer capture, ransom or loss of their goods should one of their fellows be unable to pay his own ransom.

⁴⁸ Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 75–8.

⁴⁹ AGR, CF, 4, f. 297.

⁵⁰ Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 46–9, 72–3.

⁵¹ Contamine, *La guerre*, pp. 174, 175, 177, 179, etc.

⁵² Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 355.

⁵³ AGR, CC, 2.373, f. 13.

⁵⁴ Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 188.

⁵⁵ AGR, Mss div., 1, f. 4 r.–v. or the example of Arnoul de Hoemen during the second war of Guelders (DD, III, p. 109).

⁵⁶ AGR, Mss div., 1, f. 25.

⁵⁷ For example, in 1334 (AGR, Mss div., 43/I, f. 48; CC, 10, f. 336), in 1357 (Bertholet, *Histoire*, VII, p. XX) or in 1388 (AGR, CB, 6.480–6.481).

⁵⁸ De Nave, 'Een Antwerpse', p. 7.

The participation of vassals in ducal military expeditions

Van Oeteren has analysed in detail the composition of the *routes* in Wenceslas' army at Baesweiler.⁵⁹ I shall briefly present his conclusions here:

Only a minority of vassals took part in the expedition, about 250 vassals out of the thousands present in the *Spechtboek*. For this expedition, the duke had therefore not raised his army by a mass levy of his direct vassals.

They represented a significant military force. He estimates the number of vassals in the troops at more than 20 per cent. A good number of these were important lords accompanied by a large train. Even if the ties of vassalage were not the only reason for their presence, they formed nearly a quarter of the men-at-arms assembled by the duke for the expedition.

The majority of the great vassals were in command of a unit.

Ducal vassalage was not a determining factor in the composition of the troops. The fiefs held from the duke did not form a geographical basis for the division of combatants within the *routes*. This is easily explained, as the fiefs held from the duke represented only part of the holdings of these individuals, who often possessed other lands.⁶⁰

Feudal links played an important role in the constitution of the *routes*. Unfortunately, we do not possess any listing of the *arrières-fiefs* of the duke's vassals before 1440.⁶¹ Certain documents do however allow us to see that they were sometimes made up of vassals of the leader of the *route*. Hence, the knight John van der Calsteren, lord of Linden, was followed by four of his vassals.⁶²

Vassalage thus still played an important role in the second half of the fourteenth century. Not all the vassals were in the duke's service, but he could, by calling up only a limited number of his fief holders, indirectly gather a large proportion of the men-at-arms.

I do not entirely agree with the conclusions of this author. Depending on the fiefs that they held, vassals owed services whose nature and scale varied enormously. This disparity was not unproblematic for the duke, since it made it impossible for him to rise, in any coherent manner, a large army composed solely of vassals. The payment of wages, as was common in the fourteenth century, was the most effective solution to this problem. Ducal vassals were present in large numbers in the ducal armies, but probably not solely because of the feudal ties that linked them to their lord.

The fief-rente

Definitions

As the ruler did not have infinite domains available, and as he had to retain a portion for himself, and the parcels ceded in fief had to be of a certain minimum size if he wished to be able to demand effective military service from his vassal,

⁵⁹ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 170 et seq.

⁶⁰ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 193 et seq.

⁶¹ Galesloot, *Inventaire*, p. L.

⁶² AGR, CB, 3.425.

the total number of combatants that could be found thereby was limited. This restriction evidently did not sit well with the demands of military art, which called for larger and larger forces. The use of fief-rente was one of the solutions attempted from the end of the twelfth century,⁶³ with the increase in currency supply in the West.⁶⁴ Unlike a classical fief, a fief-rente generally consisted of a sum of money⁶⁵ paid regularly by the sovereign to a vassal in exchange for homage, fidelity, military service and other feudal obligations.⁶⁶ For example, in 1317, Otto of Bueren received from John III a fief of 50 pounds of black money in exchange for a promise to serve the duke *sesse weken op sijns selfs kost met vyftigh mannen t'ors als den Hertoge gelieven sal*.⁶⁷

The fief-rente appeared in Germany during the eleventh century and was in use until 1450. In France, it did not appear until the end of the eleventh century, but it remained in use until 1500. In the Low Countries, the fief-rente also appeared at the end of the eleventh century. Until the end of the twelfth century it was found only in Flanders, Hainault and Brabant but later on, it would appear in the counties of Namur, Guelders, Holland, Looz and Luxemburg, in the duchy of Limburg and in the principality of Liège. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the system was at its zenith, after which it progressively declined throughout the following century.⁶⁸ In comparison with France or Germany, it was proportionally most popular in the Low Countries. This is hardly surprising if we take account of the economic growth of the region and its far from negligible military role in the Hundred Years' War.

The practice in Brabant

Among all the principalities of the Low Countries, it is in Brabant that fief-rente had the most success. Lyon presents a particularly informative table on the development, redistribution and evolution of this institution in the Low Countries.⁶⁹

	1100–1200	1200–1300	1300–1400	1400–1500	Total
Flanders	19	206	93	14	332
Brabant	1	44	1,244	188	1,477
Hainault	0	8	72	26	106
Namur	0	8	77	0	85
Luxemburg	1	15	38	27	81
Holland	0	23	36	2	61
Liège	0	7	77	0	84
Guelders	0	2	15	0	17
Looz	0	0	38	0	38

⁶³ Didier, 'Les rentes inféodées dans le comté de Hainaut'; Sczaniecki, *Essai sur les fiefs-rentes*; Ganshof, 'Sczaniecki (Michel). Essai sur les fiefs-rentes'; Lyon, 'Le fief rente aux Pays-Bas'; Lyon, 'The fief-rente in the Low Countries'; Lyon, *From Fief to Indenture*.

⁶⁴ Spufford, *Money*, pp. 247–8.

⁶⁵ It could also consist of a regular gift of natural produce such as grain, wine, poultry, wood etc. (AGR, 5.430, 5.448).

⁶⁶ Lyon, *From Fief*, p. 5.

⁶⁷ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuve, p. 150; Van Mieris, *Groot*, II, p. 190.

⁶⁸ Lyon, 'The fief-rente', pp. 424–7.

⁶⁹ Lyon, 'The fief-rente', pp. 425–6.

Many took advantage of that system so as to increase their revenues easily. Not only did minor lords such as those of Cuyk, Montjoie, Fauquemont, La Mark or Petersheim hold fiefs-rents from the rulers of the Low Countries and the Rhineland or from the kings of France and England; but also powerful lords such as the duke of Brabant acted in the same way.⁷⁰ The case of Henry I is a good example. In 1190, he received from the archbishop of Mainz, *quingaginta carratas vini, quas a nobis in feodo habuit*.⁷¹ Four years later, when Richard Coeur de Lion was freed by the Emperor Henry VI, he concluded military alliances against the king of France with various princes including the duke of Brabant. On this occasion he gave them a fief-rente.⁷² Finally, in 1204, the king of the Romans Philip of Swabia gave to Henry I, *in rectum foedum (. . .) annuatim sexaginta carratas vini*.⁷³ It is clear that this multiple game on the part of the vassals was not always possible, particularly when the tensions between the kingdoms of France and England were at their height. At such times everyone had to choose a side. Although Philip the Fair granted a fief-rente of 2,500 livres tournois to John II (1304),⁷⁴ and although Philip VI confirmed it during his alliance with John III (1332),⁷⁵ once the duke allied himself with Edward III in the following year, he gave up his French fief.⁷⁶ Later on, in 1339, the king of England granted him a new fief of 1,500 pounds in compensation.⁷⁷ In case of forfeiture a fief-rente was easy to withdraw. It sufficed simply to stop the payments.⁷⁸ This was an advantage of this system over the classical fief, which the lord would sometimes have to reconquer by force of arms.

The financial and political aspect of the fief-rente

The duke had to draw on the treasury to find the necessary money to pay the rent, and the local receivers or the receiver of Brabant were charged with its disbursement. Often, for various practical reasons, the rent was linked to the revenues from a possession, a toll or a tax. The *Livre des feudataires de Jean III* contains a score of categories of receipts destined for the payment of this type of fief. A large proportion of the fiefs-rentes granted by the duke were thus directly linked to the great domains of Brabant, but above all to the duchy of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse.⁷⁹ The payment of the rent was dependent on the state

⁷⁰ Lyon, *From Fief*, p. 46; Vale, 'The Anglo-French', pp. 15–35.

⁷¹ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 44.

⁷² De Mons, *Chronicon*, pp. 284–5; Smets, *Henri I^{er}*, p. 66; Poole, 'Richard the First's Alliance with the German Princes in 1194'.

⁷³ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 55.

⁷⁴ BY, I, pp. 719–20.

⁷⁵ BY, I, p. 789; Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 50.

⁷⁶ Lyon, *From Fief*, pp. 301–4.

⁷⁷ BY, I, pp. 811, 813–14, 816–17; De Sturler, *Les relations*, pp. 321–48.

⁷⁸ In 1389, when Philip the Bold took possession of the duchy of Limburg, he simply ordered his receiver to make no more payments to those who were or had been enemies to Joan or to himself (Quicke, 'Une enquête', pp. 381–2).

⁷⁹ For example, in 1363, out of sixty-two fiefs-rentes, thirty-five were linked to Maastricht, eighteen to Rolduc, six to Dalhem and three were paid by the receiver of Limburg (AGR, CB, 2.003, 2.009, 2.013, 2.053, 2.098–2.099, 2.130, 2.149, 2.878, 5.808, etc.).

of the ducal finances. In 1392, it is not surprising to see John, lord of Cuyk, claiming arrears of his rent from the duchess. Two years after the long and costly second war of Guelders, Joan was still penniless.⁸⁰ On 6 April 1401 Henry, lord of Blamont, also complained that he had not been paid for the past twenty-five years. This takes us back to the 1370s, one of the darkest times for the ducal finances.⁸¹ For the vassal, a fief-rente was therefore not always preferable to a classical fief.

The political role played by the fief-rente should not be underestimated. It was a simple means to obtain the favour of important individuals living in foreign principalities. The kings of England made much use of it to ally with princes and lords in the Low Countries during the first phase of the Hundred Years' War. For example, the family of Otto of Cuyk, an important Brabançon lord, regularly served Edward III not only as men-at-arms but also during negotiations.⁸² Wenceslas acted similarly. By means of this system he linked himself to Lambert, lord of Oupeye, marshal of the bishop of Liège, Gerard of Berk, vicar of the cathedral of Cologne or Wenemar Frambach of Birgel, marshal of Jülich.⁸³ These were all influential individuals situated in lands whose diplomatic relations with the duchy were particularly sensitive. In the same way, Philip the Bold would use it to link himself with certain of Joan's counsellors or other influential figures in Brabant.⁸⁴ It is wrong however to exaggerate the impact of this practice. Laurent and Quicke leap to the conclusion that the most powerful Brabançon lords all rallied to the cause of Burgundy, simply because they received such a rent from Philip the Bold.⁸⁵

The military aspect of the fief-rente

The military aspect of the fief-rente can be divided in two categories: the keeping of fortresses, and armed service.

In Brabant, just as elsewhere in the empire, we find many cases of fief-rente granted in exchange for keeping guard. The fortresses of Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse, enclaves within enemy territory, were thus protected for the dukes.⁸⁶ Once Philip the Bold took control of the duchy of Limburg, he made a detailed enquiry into his rights and obligations in the region. In the report of his investigators we find *plusieurs fiefs que l'on appelle les fiefs du chatels*.⁸⁷ There is no doubt that this category conceals the fiefs-rentes previously granted by Wenceslas and Joan to the local lords. The great number of fiefs granted for keeping guard in this region is easily explicable. By its nature, the fief-rente was an excellent means available to the duke to extend his

⁸⁰ AGR, Mss div., 1/A, f. 7.

⁸¹ AGR, CB, 7.207–7.208.

⁸² Lucas, *The Low Countries*, pp. 112, 354, 380–1; De Sturler, *Les relations*, pp. 160–2, 364–5.

⁸³ AGR, CB, 3.070, 4.814, 5.291, 5.497, 5.606, 5.775, 5.808, etc.; CLux, 1.214.

⁸⁴ AGR, CB, 6.810.

⁸⁵ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, p. 445.

⁸⁶ For example, the fortress of Kerpen (AGR, CF, 4, f. 335 v.; Galesloot, *Le livre*, pp. 135, 138–9, 141, 199, 273–4).

⁸⁷ Quicke, 'Une enquête', p. 378.

authority over small neighbouring territories. In effect, once a fief-rente was granted to a minor lord, he would sometimes agree to hold his fortress in fief also. The ruler could thus, at small expense, make use of the castle of his new vassal and include it in the defensive system of his domains.⁸⁸ Examples are numerous. In 1343, John III favoured John, count of Catsenellenboge, with a fief of 200 pounds in exchange for the homage of the count for his castle of Stadeck.⁸⁹ In 1378, Wenceslas granted a fief of 10 pounds and a subsidy of 100 pounds to Lancelot of Elz on condition that he places his stronghold at the duke's service when he called for it.⁹⁰ In 1383, the same went for the fortress of Heinsberg.⁹¹ In 1409, Albert of Colditz became a liegeman to Anthony in exchange for a fief of 400 Rhenish *florins*. On this occasion, he promised to place his fortresses at the disposal of the duke.⁹²

From the end of the thirteenth century, the dukes regularly made use of the fief-rente to increase the number of vassals ready to follow them in their military expedition.⁹³ The fourteenth century was the golden age of this procedure.⁹⁴ It was still in regular use at the start of the fifteenth century, above all under the reign of Anthony, and then gradually disappeared during the course of the century.⁹⁵ Sczaniecki has shown that fief-rente was not a means for the payment of mercenaries.⁹⁶ Also, the fief-rente must be clearly distinguished from the indenture. A man-at-arms served because he was a vassal and not because he received a sum of money. The rent was paid regularly even if the duke made no call on his service. It did not replace wages, and often its value was less than that of one year's pay. It was a means to form a link with a person and to be sure of his support. The practical details of the engagement, such as service at one's own cost, paid service, reimbursement of losses⁹⁷ and so on were consigned to an indenture. Hence, it is not surprising to find that there exists no relation between the value of the fief-rente and the military obligations that it entailed since it was no more than a simple advance in view of some eventual future service. The value of the fief-rente depended on the status and rank of the beneficiary or the particular circumstances of its granting. In recompense for his services against Charles, duke of Orléans, Anthony increased in 1411 the

⁸⁸ De Waha, 'Enghien (1364) et Gaesbeeck (1388). Guerre civile, institutions, rapports de forces entre princes, nobles et villes'.

⁸⁹ AGR, CF, 33; CB, charter of 1 August 1450.

⁹⁰ AGR, CLux, 1.250.

⁹¹ Quicke, 'Documents', pp. 105, 116, 158.

⁹² AGR, CB, 7.731; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, pp. 85, 86, 128.

⁹³ In 1281, Thierry of Heinsberg received a fief-rente of 100 pounds from John I (Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 114).

⁹⁴ From 1360 to 1365 more than 230 charters in Brabant concern the fief-rente.

⁹⁵ We can judge of the decline of this institution by counting the reference to the fief-rente appearing in the *recette générale*. In 1363–64, twenty-five mentions; in 1364–65, thirty-nine mentions but in 1468–69, one only (AGR, CC, 2.350, 2.351, 2.423). They also disappeared from charters in Brabant.

⁹⁶ Sczaniecki, *Essai*, pp. 48–58.

⁹⁷ After the war of the succession of Brabant, we find several holders of fiefs-rentes among the combatants whose losses the duke reimbursed (AGR, CB, 995, 1.034, 2.043; CC, 50.344–50.345, f. 81).

fief-rente of Wenemar Frambach of Birgel by 100 *florins*.⁹⁸ Often, the lord added a gift, sometimes a substantial one, when he granted a fief-rente. He probably hoped that this additional sum would allow his vassal to serve him in better conditions. In 1295, a subsidy of 4,000 pounds was offered by Edward I to John II⁹⁹ and successive gifts of 10,000 pounds, 60,000 pounds and 100,000 *florins* were granted by Edward III to John III between 1337 and 1339 for his military help against Philip VI.¹⁰⁰ In wartime, a fief-rente could also serve as a means of remuneration to a faithful follower who, because he had served the ruler, had seen his landed fiefs confiscated by the enemy. In this case, the fief-rente lasted only until the recovery of the lost possessions. In 1356, Wenceslas promised to grant an indemnity to Arnold, lord of Stein, who had seen his holdings confiscated by the count of Namur, then an enemy to Brabant. In 1357, he received a fief-rente of 50 *royaux d'or* in compensation.¹⁰¹

The causes of the disappearance of the fief-rente

Lyon raises an interesting problem. Why should a fief-rente be granted if it was still necessary to pay for the services provided? Why form such a link to a man-at-arms rather than simply hiring mercenaries and thus make a saving on the rents? For that author, the answer was to be found in the feudal system:

This system, so entrenched in Western Europe since the middle of the eighth century, completely dominated the political, economic, social, and military institutions. To give a knight wages for his service without binding him by a form of feudal tenure would have been rash in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Feudal custom could not be abruptly pushed aside merely because there was more money. Not until money and the institutions it made possible were as common as feudalism had been, would men be completely emancipated from feudal influence.¹⁰²

The fief-rente would thus be the bridge between feudal and non-feudal service, a transitional stage between two radically different systems.¹⁰³ This is an interesting idea but not an entirely satisfying one. While it seems to match the general tendencies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries well, it still does not explain why the golden age of the system should be found in the fourteenth century. What is more, the use of mercenaries appeared very early on, and many rulers had recourse to it with a clear conscience.¹⁰⁴ Elsewhere, Lyon considers that the various factors responsible for the disappearance of fief-rente were the general levy or *arrière-ban*¹⁰⁵ and the use of the indentures.¹⁰⁶ Within the

⁹⁸ AGR, CC, 11, f. 6 v., 30.

⁹⁹ Lyon, *From Fief*, pp. 288–9.

¹⁰⁰ De Sturler, *Les relations*, pp. 321–48.

¹⁰¹ AGR, CB, 952, 1.608, 2.030, 2.176.

¹⁰² Lyon, *From Fief*, pp. 244, 262; Lyon, 'The Feudal Antecedent of the Indenture System'.

¹⁰³ McFarlane, 'Bastard feudalism'; Perroy, 'Feudalism or Principalities in Fifteenth Century France'; Lewis, 'Decayed and non-feudalism in later medieval France'.

¹⁰⁴ Isaac, 'The Problem with Mercenaries'.

¹⁰⁵ Lyon, *From Fief*, pp. 249–51.

¹⁰⁶ Lyon, *From Fief*, p. 251.

restricted scope of Brabant, I can affirm that the occasional recourse to a general mobilisation played no role in its decline. Furthermore, I do not believe that fief-rente and indenture should be considered alternatives. The former was a means to form a link with a person, while the latter was a contract governing the forms of his service. In 1285, John I gave to John, lord of Oudenaarde, as an addition to his fief of Gouy, three *queues* of Rhenish wine and one falcon per year. The duke specified however that he did not have to serve at his own expense.¹⁰⁷ In this case, it is clear that the lord of Oudenaarde was obliged to serve the duke and that the forms of his service must have been specified in another document, the indenture. The two systems thus coexisted perfectly well. Of course, once the system of the indenture was well established, it was also possible to use it with people who were not vassals. It is therefore not surprising if throughout the fourteenth century the dukes had recourse to both the fief-rente and the indenture. The survival of the fief-rente into the later Middle Ages is also explicable by its political and diplomatic aspects. The use made of it by the first dukes of Burgundy in the region is informative on this subject. A fief-rente was thus closely related to a gift or a present, but unlike these, the giver formed a contractual bond with the recipient. He hoped that his money would therefore not be spent in vain.

The indenture

Definitions

The indenture¹⁰⁸ was a contract covering the respective duties of the two contracted parties. In general, we find stated the name and the number of people who had to serve the duke,¹⁰⁹ the equipment that they were to bring, the length of service due and the date from which it would start, the total payment due, and some clauses concerning the fulfilment or cancellation of the service. We sometimes also see some details concerning the procedure to be followed so as to benefit from a reimbursement. The interesting feature of the indenture is that it bound the combatant to his employer independently of their respective ranks. Whether for a simple squire or a knight banneret, the terms of the contract were clearly stated and, in theory, could not be broken. Thus the combatants all had the same relationship to the authority. The indenture also allowed better management of the troops, better discipline among the men, and in short a better organisation of the army. It is therefore not surprising that this type of contract was used by all the western powers in this era.

The practice of paid service appeared in the twelfth century.¹¹⁰ In Brabant, it is not until the thirteenth century, during the Iberian expeditions of John I, that

¹⁰⁷ AGR, CB, 117; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 121.

¹⁰⁸ I have used the English term 'indenture' instead of the French *lettre de retenue*, but the reader must be aware that these charters were not literally indented.

¹⁰⁹ In 1356, this number could vary between one (AGR, CB, 1.197) and one hundred (AGR, CB, 936).

¹¹⁰ Contamine, *La guerre*, pp. 192–207.

we see the first examples.¹¹¹ Not until fifty years later do we see further contracts. In 1338–39, John III raised an army so as to fulfil his obligations towards Edward III.¹¹² It seems, however, that during the great coalition against Brabant (1332–34), indentures had already been used by the duke.¹¹³ For the war of the succession of Brabant (1356–57), only a few documents have come down to us, although many more must once have existed.¹¹⁴ As far as the *chevauchée* of Jülich (1371) is concerned, no charter has been preserved, but I am certain that this type of contract was in use. Not only did the duke have no easier way to raise an army, but also the reimbursements following the defeat were typical of this type of service.¹¹⁵ We do, nonetheless, possess an interesting document dating from 8 October 1371 when Joan was preparing to rescue her husband.¹¹⁶ After this date we can find no further examples. The settlements and other accounting archives leave me in no doubt, however, that indentures were indeed in use throughout the period of our study.

I can explain the disappearance of indentures from the charters of Brabant. At the end of the fourteenth century, the practice of *restor* disappeared in France, in England and in Burgundy.¹¹⁷ It seems to be the same in Brabant.¹¹⁸ Thereafter the *Chambre des Comptes* had less reason to keep administrative documents concerning the payments and reimbursements of men-at-arms. Elsewhere, we know that in England large armies were raised according to the system of indentures without a single act being sealed.¹¹⁹ The same may be true of Brabant as, contrary to France or England, the Brabançon archives are particularly poor in this kind of document.¹²⁰

Evolution of the indenture in Brabant

End of the thirteenth century

These first indentures were produced in two versions, one from the contractee to the contractor and one from the contractor to the contractee. There we find the name of the man-at-arms who undertook to serve the duke; the number of combatants who were to follow him; the duration of their service; the expedition for which they were engaged; their total payment; the forms of their payment

¹¹¹ Boffa, 'Les soutiens', pp. 32–3. The development of a system of recruitment based on indentures, with all the labour of writing that this implies, is largely owing to the development of the ducal chancellery.

¹¹² AGR, CB, 477–621; Wauters, 'La formation d'une armée brabançonne'; De Sturler, 'Une démarche politique inconnue de Jean III'.

¹¹³ As suggested by an act of 1335 (AGR, CB, 418).

¹¹⁴ AGR, CB, 936, 1.073, 1.173, 1.185, 1.197 or 1.233–1.242.

¹¹⁵ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 97, 101 et seq.

¹¹⁶ BY, II, pp. 621–2.

¹¹⁷ Schnerb, 'Le cheval', pp. 85–7.

¹¹⁸ The disappearance of *scadeboek* is an argument in favour of this hypothesis.

¹¹⁹ Hewitt, *The Organization*, pp. 25–6.

¹²⁰ In England, just as the king made indenture with the captains, so they made sub-contracts with those who served under them (Prestwich, *Armies*, p. 95). It may be that the *routes* in the Low Countries were formed in the same way when the men-at-arms who formed them were not bound by ties of family or dependence, but this is only a hypothesis as no sub-indenture has ever been found.

and some other matters concerning their service. In one of these charters, Rasse of Gavre and four knights undertook to follow the duke for one year in exchange for the considerable sum of 3,000 pounds. The letter specifies that if the expedition were cut short, they would be paid in proportion to the time for which they had served. If Rasse of Gavre, or one of the four knights, could not accompany the duke, they were to find a replacement. The duke could thus be sure that he would have the expected number of combatants with him. Only the contractee is named in the document, the four other men-at-arms are not. This made it easier to choose the knights that were to accompany him. The duration of the service is clearly stated. This was not the case in France, nor later on for Brabant or for England, where the indenture never specified in advance the expected duration of service, which depended explicitly on the prince's sole decision.¹²¹ No mention is made of any *montre* organised by the duke or his officers, nor of an eventual *restor* for horses lost during the campaign. The indenture being a contract between the duke and various knights, the ruler could break the contract. In effect, he could choose to cut short the expedition, and, in this case, the knights would be paid only in proportion to the time served. We may therefore suppose that if the duke cancelled the expedition he could recover the entirety of the payment. It seems that Rasse of Gavre and his knights, once engaged, could not withdraw. They had to follow the duke. Only in the case of *loiaus* difficulties could they find substitutes for the expedition, and it was not stated that they could repay the money to the duke and thus regain their liberty. Gerard of Luxemburg, on the other hand, could on his own initiative leave the duke during the campaign. This additional liberty granted to him as well as his payment was probably a consequence of his higher status.

The years 1338–1339

While John III was preparing to support the English against the king of France, he entrusted to two receivers, Herman of Oss and John of Meldert, the responsibility for organising an army. On this occasion, more than eighty indentures were prepared. These acts were relatively simple and contained little information: the name of the contractee; the number of knights, squires and men that made up his train; and the sum of their payments. The duke required that these men be well armed and that they possess good horses. Once again there is no mention of a *montre* or of a *restor*. No detail is given regarding the start of the service, nor of a particular expedition. The combatants had simply to hold themselves in readiness to serve against any of the duke's enemies during the present war between France and England.

All of these documents are very similar, even though they were probably not prepared according to a formula. The act of Henry (III) Bertout, lord of Duffel and Geel, does however include a special clause. He undertook to return to the duke the sum paid to him if he had not been called to serve before the next feast of Saint-John.¹²² The simplicity of these acts when compared to the previous indentures is astonishing. The duke probably looked on them more as a simple

¹²¹ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 60; Lewis, 'An early', p. 87.

¹²² AGR, CB, 563.

promise of service. An indenture in the full and proper form must surely have been drawn up later, just before the actual service. This is suggested by a charter of 1337, in which Edward III promised to pay, for the period of two months and in one lump sum, the wages of the 1,200 men-at-arms that John III was to bring. The wage would be 15 *florins* of Florence for each man and per month. These sums would be paid for one whole year if need be.¹²³ The king undertook to indemnify them for all the horses lost, excepting those of the baggage train, within one month after declaration of such loss and to free them if they were captured, either by exchange of prisoners or by payment of a ransom.¹²⁴ Here we find the clauses absent from the acts of 1338–39.

The years 1356–1357

Van Oeteren has shown that the documents at the time could take two forms. Most often, there is only an announcement of the holding of an individual with a stated number of men-at-arms. In this case, the term “retain” (*onthouden*) was used by the scribe.¹²⁵ In other cases, the duke indicated that an individual had undertaken to serve him in his wars.¹²⁶ Here we encounter a document similar to, though more complete than, the charters of 1338–39. The few archives at our disposal do not allow us to explain the respective uses of these different forms. These acts contain for the first time a clause stating that the duke undertook to reimburse all the losses of horses or of equipment as well as the ransom of unlucky combatants (*restor, restauratio equorum*). We may be startled by this measure. The duke hoped thereby to guarantee the bellicosity of the men-at-arms that he engaged. Thanks to the *restor*, they would not fear risking their precious possessions and costly mounts during the battle. The condition was also included that all the enemy men-at-arms taken prisoner during the operations were to be given up to the duke.¹²⁷ It is the inclusion of this clause that makes comprehensible the generosity of the reimbursements promised by the prince. Service at the ruler’s expense, taken without this clause, would have put warfare beyond the means of any sovereign. A single indenture refers to a *monstre van lude van wapen*, but all the men-at-arms must surely have been present there.

The strength of the troops was always counted in terms of the *glavie* and the *panchier*. No matter whether they were Brabançon lords, vassals of the duke or foreign men-at-arms, the amount of pay was the same for all: one *écu* per day for each *glavie* and one half *écu* per *panchier*. The same sums are referred to in the settlements¹²⁸ as well as in the *scadeboek*.¹²⁹ Exceptionally, there were those that received only a quarter of an *écu* per day, no doubt because of incomplete equip-

¹²³ In 1336, in an alliance between Flanders, Brabant and Hainault, it was decided that: ‘chascun bannerech le jour vint gros; pour le baceller dis gros; et pour l’escuyer chuinc gros; et tous seront viés gros tournois le Roy u monnoie au vaillant à payer de wit jours en wit jours’ (Laurent, ‘Actes’, pp. 109–15, no 76).

¹²⁴ AGR, CB, 448.

¹²⁵ AGR, CB, 1.073, 1.185, 1.233–1.242.

¹²⁶ ‘Ons gheloeft heeft te dienen in onsen orloghe . . .’ (AGR, CB, 936, 1.173).

¹²⁷ AGR, CB, 1.073, 1.197 or 1.233–1.242.

¹²⁸ AGR, CB, 974, 1.013, 1.019, 1.020, etc.

¹²⁹ AGR, CC, 50.344/50.345, f. 83 v., 89 v., 91 v., etc.

ment or inferior rank.¹³⁰ Later, in 1384, the pay of a man-at-arms would rise to one *florin* per day.¹³¹ This relative uniformity of pay contrasts sharply with the system used elsewhere. Among the Namurois, in 1343, a knight accompanied by three horses received three shillings per day while a squire with two horses received only two. The pay seems to have been proportional to the number of mounts that accompanied the man-at-arms.¹³² In France, in the royal armies, the remuneration of squires or man-at-arms, knights bachelor and knights banneret doubled with the passage from each rank to the next (in 1364, respectively 10, 20 and 40 *sous tournois* a day). It was thus not the quality of the equipment but the chivalric hierarchy that was taken into consideration.¹³³ A similar situation occurred in England, where an earl received per day 6 s. 8 d., a banneret 4 s., a knight 2 s., a man-at-arms 1 s., a mounted archer 6 d. and an archer on foot 3 d.¹³⁴ Mattheessens has however made clear the great difference in the sum of the reimbursements for horses and equipment made by the duke:

Noble-knight:	2,284 <i>écus</i>
Individual recognised as knight by the duke:	1,937 <i>écus</i>
Individual describing themselves as knight:	345 <i>écus</i>
Other combatants:	92 <i>écus</i> and a half ¹³⁵

He attributes this variation to the status of the claimant. I think, however, that we should not link these variations directly to the status of the personage. On the contrary, it is evident that a person of higher rank was accompanied by a more numerous train, possessed a more valuable horse and equipment, and would have to pay a higher ransom. Hence, it is not surprising for them to benefit from higher indemnities.

The indenture fixed the frequency of the payment of wages. This was generally once every month or once every fifteen days. Guarantees were also put in place to protect the combatants from any delay in payment. In particular, the duke undertook to reimburse the costs occasioned by such a delay, and not to cut off their payments before having paid all that was due.¹³⁶ In certain cases the leader of a *route* benefited from privileged treatment. John of Mere, who promised to serve with one hundred *glaives*, received from the duke a sum of 600 old *écus* as well as the daily pay for his men-at-arms.¹³⁷ For Ulric, lord of Fénétrange, the payment was 150 *écus*, which would be paid every two weeks *voir sijns selfs lijf*.¹³⁸ In this latter case we encounter the equivalent of the indemnities granted by the king of France to his war leaders to allow them to *soustenir leur estat*.¹³⁹

¹³⁰ AGR, CC, 50.344/50.345, f. 89 v., 99, 107.

¹³¹ AGR, CC, 15.716, f. 40 v.

¹³² Bormans, *Les fiefs*, I, p. 28.

¹³³ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 14–16, 95–8, 619–36. It seems that in 1338–39, the same criterion was considered (Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 79–80).

¹³⁴ Hewitt, *The Organization*, p. 36.

¹³⁵ All these figures are averages (Mattheessens, 'Het leger', p. 61).

¹³⁶ AGR, CB, 1.233.

¹³⁷ AGR, CB, 936.

¹³⁸ AGR, CB, 1.185.

¹³⁹ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, pp. 106–7.

The contracts never fixed the duration of the service. While the ruler could dispatch his men-at-arms at will, so long as he had paid them all that was due, there is no suggestion that the combatants were able to quit the duke's service. We are therefore dealing with a flexible system of contracts, similar to that used in France. This allowed the duke to adapt the strength of his army to the needs of the situation and his financial means, rather better than the system of permanent engagements in use in England. It is important to note that alongside the indentures, we also find other documents stating only some of the clauses usually contained in these letters. Thus we have promises to indemnify all damages suffered in the service of the duke,¹⁴⁰ or promises to pay wages.¹⁴¹ These were accounting documents, intended to reassure the men-at-arms or to encourage them to be patient.

The year 1371

On 8 October 1371, Engelbert of La Mark and Adolf of La Mark, count of Cleves undertook to serve the duchess with five hundred *lances* against the duke of Jülich. These two lords would receive 100 double *moutons* per day. The wages of their followers were one double *mouton* per day for two *glaives* and would be paid one month in advance. Should the duke of Jülich be captured, he was to be given up to Joan for the sum of 100,000 *vieux écus*. I believe that this document should be treated not as a simple indenture, but rather as a hybrid between an indenture and a treaty of alliance.¹⁴²

Conclusions

The system of indentures was an important stage in the organisation of armies. Their size and the duration of their activity could now be fixed in advance and adjusted according to need. This system allowed better financial management of the men-at-arms since it was now possible to establish more precisely the budget for the war. In addition, a wage was an effective means to control the actions of the combatant and obtain the service for which he had been recruited, since it was always possible to break the contract if he did not obey its terms.

At first sight, the system in Brabant is similar to that in England. However, we find some fundamental differences. In England, use was commonly made of the letter of protection, a document issued by chancery that gave the recipient security from a wide range of legal actions for the duration of a specified period of service. A man knowing that court proceedings were pending at the time of his departure for war could secure a letter of protection and thereby halt the process of law until he had returned to England; but it is likely that most letters of protection were obtained as precautionary measure, to deal with unexpected legal actions.¹⁴³ In France, a similar system was also in use.¹⁴⁴ We find no such document in Brabant. English men-at-arms also benefited from a bonus

¹⁴⁰ AGR, CB, 937.

¹⁴¹ AGR, CB, 951.

¹⁴² BY, II, pp. 621–2.

¹⁴³ Prestwich, *Armies*, pp. 109–10.

¹⁴⁴ Contamine, *Guerre, état*, p. 44.

payment known as *regard*. This was introduced for continental expeditions in the mid-1340s and appears to have been intended as a supplement to men-at-arms pay to help cover the ever growing cost of plate armour. This was a substantial sum as the *regard* rose to 6 d. per day.¹⁴⁵ The king of England also used charters of pardon to attract volunteers. Usually they are dated in the month following the return of *compagnies* to England. The recipient is discharged of all felonies committed before a certain date and of any consequent outlawries. It is possible that from two to twelve per cent of most of the armies of Edward III consisted of outlaws.¹⁴⁶ The dukes of Brabant never needed to have recourse to this practice. The smaller size of their armies and the goodwill of the combatants were enough to satisfy their ambitions.

Those exempted from military service

Peculiar privileges

Non-combatants represent the major part of the population. Among them we find women, churchmen, the sick, the handicapped, youths of less than fifteen, and old men past their sixtieth year. To all these we must also add certain groups benefiting from particular privileges, which meant that they did not have to fight in the armies of the duke. The examples that follow are not an exhaustive list, but rather a few representative cases.

In 1195, Henry I declared free from all exactions and all military service those who would retire to the hospital of the Holy Spirit in Brussels. This was under the condition that those who went there did so without their children and were beyond the age to have any more.¹⁴⁷

In 1277, John I took the *bogards*¹⁴⁸ of Brussels under his protection.¹⁴⁹ In 1280, he did the same for those of Leuven.¹⁵⁰ In 1281, the brothers of Diest benefited from his favour.¹⁵¹ Finally, in 1296, John II granted his protection to those who resided at Antwerp.¹⁵² At the same time, they were exempted from all duties, aids and military service. Possibly influenced by the policy of John I, in 1286, Walter Berthout, lord of Malines, took under his protection those who resided there. It was however stipulated that their work should be interrupted in wartime just as other forms of work were also halted. They were not to return to their labours until work had begun again in the town.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ Prestwich, *Armies*, pp. 93–5.

¹⁴⁶ Hewitt, *The Organization*, pp. 29–30.

¹⁴⁷ AGR, CC, 8, f. 561 v.; Bonenfant, *Cartulaire*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁴⁸ The *bogards* were originally lay brotherhoods who manufactured textile goods. Thereafter, in the fourteenth century, the association changed into exclusively religious congregations.

¹⁴⁹ Vannerus, 'Documents . . . Anvers', p. 472.

¹⁵⁰ Vannerus, 'Documents . . . Anvers', p. 472; Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1212–13, 1218.

¹⁵¹ Stallaert, 'Inventaire', p. 191; Raymaekers, *Het kerkelijk*, p. 300.

¹⁵² This act would be confirmed by John III on 6 January 1326 (n. st.) (Vannerus, 'Documents . . . Anvers', pp. 567–9).

¹⁵³ Vannerus, 'Documents . . . Anvers', p. 484; Vannerus, 'Documents . . . Malines', p. 239.

In the late Middle Ages, the *Lombards* played an important role in the economy of Brabant. The duke often called on their service and on their wealth.¹⁵⁴ In return, he protected them and granted them various liberties. On 18 September 1406, Anthony freed them from all taxes and all seigniorial rights including military obligations.¹⁵⁵

The first privilege granted to the moneyers of Brabant dates from July 1291. It would be confirmed in August 1411. They were exempt from taxes, from aids, and from services in war, except for sums due for the ransom of the duke, his eldest son or his successors.¹⁵⁶ Money being the sinews of war, the duke could not stand by and watch his mint shut down in a time of crisis.

Finally, certain lords and villages enjoyed the same liberties. They did not hesitate to make use of them when occasion arose. On 24 February 1425, the *échevins* of 's Hertogenbosch examined Thierry of Meerhem, lord of Bokstel, because he and his subjects were accused of not having taken part in the recent expedition in Hainault. The latter therefore exhibited the privileges long since granted him by the Emperor Charles IV and by the duke of Brabant. They indicated that the lord and the inhabitants of Bokstel were exempt from all services and taxes. Thierry and his subjects were not further troubled.¹⁵⁷

Neutrality

Several towns and enclaves enjoyed a particular status. This was often the result of an eventful history, troubled by the battles of rival rulers desirous of control over the same place. The case of Maastricht, Beauvechain and Tourinnes are well known. The situation of Heusden was similar. When Wenceslas decided to cede the town in fief to William V, count of Holland, it was decided that should war break out between Brabant and Holland, the inhabitants of Heusden could take no part.¹⁵⁸ Just before the outbreak of the war of the succession of Brabant, the magistrates of Malines forbade the townspeople on pain of death to aid either Flanders or Brabant. Only the vassals of one or other ruler might serve, on condition that they return to Malines should the town be drawn into the conflict.¹⁵⁹

In the preceding examples, it was a double sovereignty that entailed the neutrality of the place. Of course, this was not the only case in which it was forbidden to take up arms. The duke, for his own reason, could simply forbid his subjects to go to war. This was the case in 1396, when a new crusade against the Frisians was organised.¹⁶⁰ Joan, no doubt recalling the tragic fate of her first husband, *avoit deffendu par tout son pays que nul gentil homme, ne autre ne s'avançast d'y aler*.¹⁶¹ Similarly, one of the first decisions taken by Anthony after

¹⁵⁴ Kusman, 'Entre noblesse, ville et clergé. Les financiers lombards dans les anciens Pays-Bas aux XIV^e–XV^e siècle'.

¹⁵⁵ AGR, CC, 131, f. 19, 20 v.; CC, 154, f. 57 v., 62; Bigwood, *Le régime*, II, pp. 87, 98.

¹⁵⁶ AGR, CC, 23, f. 19 v.; *Placcaeten*, I, pp. 246–8; Verachter, *Documens*, pp. 104–6.

¹⁵⁷ AGR, CC, 8, f. 33, 34, 36, 38 v.; CC, 13, f. 72.

¹⁵⁸ Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, p. 473; DD, II, p. 521.

¹⁵⁹ David, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 198–9.

¹⁶⁰ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, pp. 276–7.

¹⁶¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XV, p. 284.

his succession to the throne of Brabant was to forbid the knights and squires of the duchy to serve abroad, on pain of the loss of life and goods.¹⁶² Mund holds that ‘Anthony wished by this means to prevent his military resources from quitting the duchy and, *a fortiori*, turning against him’.¹⁶³ I am not convinced by this interpretation. It seems unlikely to me that the knights of Brabant would have so rebelled against their former *ruward* and their present duke. It is likely that Anthony already had bellicose projects in mind – an expedition against the duke of Guelders – and wished to guarantee the participation of the men-at-arms of the duchy.

Buying off military service

Originally, the duke or certain of his officers could authorise the people of towns not to join the army. So we gather from the *keure* granted to the *ammanie* of Brussels (1292)¹⁶⁴ or that given to the *mairie* of Nivelles (1292).¹⁶⁵ Later, the possibility of buying off one’s service would be taken into account. In 1327, John III decided that in case of war, an inhabitant of Leuven who wished to be exempted from military service should pay a suitable sum to the *échevins*. The proceeds would be divided, half for the duke and half for the town.¹⁶⁶ In the course of the fourteenth century, this right was granted to all the inhabitants of the duchy.¹⁶⁷ Since the *hauts justiciers* and their subordinates were charged with the mobilisation of the troops, they had also to gather the sums paid in lieu of service and to punish those who, without having bought off their service, had still not joined the army.

All this brings us directly to the problem of fraud. It is not uncommon to find, in the accounts of the *justiciers*, fines imposed either on individuals or on communities who had forgotten to join the army. For example, in 1356, Gerard vander Elst, *écoutète* of Antwerp, fined an inhabitant who had remained at home without permission,¹⁶⁸ and, in 1388, the inhabitants of Kessel had to pay a fine to Charles of Immerzeel, *margrave* of Rijen, as they had not gone to fight.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, these functionaries were not beyond all reproach. By complaisance or in exchange for bribes, many of them displayed laxity and infringed the orders of the duke. The situation became so grave at times that general enquiries conducted by officers of the duke would be organised.¹⁷⁰ In the charters of 7 and

¹⁶² AGR, CC, 45.673, f. 25 v.–26.

¹⁶³ Mund, ‘La politique’, p. 153.

¹⁶⁴ VH, p. 548.

¹⁶⁵ VH, p. 554.

¹⁶⁶ BY, I, pp. 773–6; Molanus, *Historiae*, II, pp. 1242–6; Van Uytven, *Stadsfinanciën*, pp. 104–5.

¹⁶⁷ Bolsée, *La grande enquête de 1389 en Brabante*, p. 145.

¹⁶⁸ AGR, CR, 2.251.

¹⁶⁹ AGR, CR, 2.329.

¹⁷⁰ Piot, ‘Une enquête sur la conduite des fonctionnaires sous le règne de Jean III’; Piot, ‘Deux nouvelles enquêtes faites en 1363 et 1389 sur la conduite des fonctionnaires au duché de Brabant’; Bolsée, *La grande*.

8 April 1389 (n. st.), which contain the instruction given to the individuals charged with enquiring into these abuses, mention is clearly made of this malversation.¹⁷¹

The size of the Brabançon armies in the fourteenth century

The men-at-arms

The study of the strength of the armies is an excellent method to determine the efficacy of the system of recruitment and mobilisation used by the duke. I have already had occasion to recall that medieval armies were made up of combatants each serving according to his own obligations of contracts. This situation explains one of the principal difficulties we encounter in trying to estimate the size of a medieval army. While the narrative sources often refer to the strength of the army as a whole, the administrative documents instead offer a limited account of one particular type of combatant. It is well known with what caution a historian must make use of the information offered by chroniclers where the sizes of armies are concerned. At the battle of Scheut, the only author contemporary with the events presents a Brabançon troop 100,000 men strong. He estimates their losses at 4,500 killed or drowned.¹⁷² According to Jean Froissart, the army of Brabant assembled for the second siege of Grave was made up of 500 *lances* and from twenty to thirty thousand militiamen.¹⁷³ If we were to believe Edmond de Dynter, during the third war of Guelders, Joan would have raised an army 40,000 strong.¹⁷⁴ These figures are of course exaggerated but, curiously, some serious historians such as Laurent and Quicke consider some of these plausible.¹⁷⁵

The chroniclers were not so fantastical all the time and, in certain cases, they are very useful to us. Thanks to Jan van Heelu, we can form a good idea of the part played by the Brabançon chivalry at the battle of Worringen.¹⁷⁶ Jean le Bel speaks of *XIIc armeures de fer bien habilliez et bien pourvus* accompanying John III when the duke of Brabant assisted Edward III in his wars with France.¹⁷⁷ This total agrees perfectly with the strength mentioned in the alliances concluded between the two sovereigns.¹⁷⁸ Edmond de Dynter often contents himself with giving an order of magnitude rather than offering fantastical figures,¹⁷⁹ while in the *Brabantsche Yeesten* mention is often made of small contingents of a few hundred men-at-arms.¹⁸⁰ As for the *chevauchée* of Jülich, two different sources

¹⁷¹ Piot, 'Deux', pp. 190, 191–2.

¹⁷² *Breve chronicon*, p. 29.

¹⁷³ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, pp. 101–2.

¹⁷⁴ DD, III, p. 135.

¹⁷⁵ Laurent and Quicke, *Les origines*, pp. 209–10, 215.

¹⁷⁶ Lehnart, *Die Schlacht von Worringen*.

¹⁷⁷ Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 159.

¹⁷⁸ Jean le Bel proposes the same figure for the army commanded by Wenceslas in 1356 when he liberated the duchy from Flemish occupation (1356) (Le Bel, *Vraies*, I, p. 235).

¹⁷⁹ DD, II, pp. 474, 497, 522, 545, etc.

¹⁸⁰ BY, I, pp. 517, 519, 525.

agree almost exactly on the Brabançon strength: 2,400 or 2,500 *lances*.¹⁸¹ The statements of chroniclers should therefore not be dismissed out of hand. Unfortunately, when it is impossible to check their information it is dangerous to use the data provided by the narrative sources.

The normative sources are much more detailed and varied. The text of treaties, for example, often indicated the number of combatants that each party had to assemble in case of need. In the alliance agreed in 1295 between Edward I and John II, the latter undertook to serve the king with 2,000 men-at-arms in return for a payment of 160,000 pounds.¹⁸² In 1337, Edward III promised to pay the wages of 1,200 combatants provided by John III.¹⁸³ A similar agreement was sealed in 1338¹⁸⁴ and then in 1339, but this time concerning 1,000 men. This last number could be doubled if need be.¹⁸⁵ By the conventions of Saint-Quentin (1347), the duke of Brabant undertook to gather a force of 500 knights and 2,000 foot soldiers in less than two months if the count of Flanders rose against the king of France.¹⁸⁶ In the alliance of 12 April 1357 between the duke of Brabant and the count of Hainault, they each agreed to come to the aid of the other with 1,000 knights and mounted squires and with 8,000 foot soldiers.¹⁸⁷

In the preceding examples, the dukes placed themselves under the obligation to raise armies whose size varied between 1,000 and 2,000 men-at-arms. Were they able to assemble such a force? Undoubtedly yes. Verbruggen holds that John I disposed of 2,200 to 2,400 knights in 1288.¹⁸⁸ The indentures for the years 1338–39 concern around a thousand men. Mattheessens estimates at 3,000 to 3,500 the number of men-at-arms in the army of 1356–57.¹⁸⁹ The settlements for the *chevauchée* of Jülich provide us with the names of almost 2,000 people, but van Oeteren holds that this troop must have counted at least 5,000 combatants.¹⁹⁰ Finally, on 28 July 1388, the towns and countryside agreed to maintain at their expense and for three months 1,200 *lances* and 400 archers to protect the duchy against attacks from Guelders.¹⁹¹

We must however note that these large armies were unusual. The majority of military operations were carried out with much smaller forces, above all when a conflict drew out into a war of *courses*, attrition and skirmishes. During a *chevauchée* organised in July 1371, the forces amounted to only 200 men.¹⁹² In 1387, the *écoutète* of Maasland led a raid in Guelders at the head of *XVI ghesellen te perde ende mit LXXXIII knechten te voet*.¹⁹³ Many treaties concern only a

¹⁸¹ Froissart, *Chroniques*, XIII, p. 21; Von Wolfhagen, *Die Limburger Chronik*, p. 60.

¹⁸² De Sturler, 'Actes', p. 19.

¹⁸³ AGR, CB, 448.

¹⁸⁴ BY, I, p. 811.

¹⁸⁵ AGR, CB, 623; Lucas, *The Low Countries*, p. 353.

¹⁸⁶ Laurent, 'Les conventions', p. 135.

¹⁸⁷ AVL, 246.

¹⁸⁸ Verbruggen, *The Art*, pp. 264–6.

¹⁸⁹ In this total he takes no account of valets or attendants (Mattheessens, 'Het leger', p. 59).

¹⁹⁰ Van Oeteren, 'Recrutement', pp. 145–53.

¹⁹¹ BR, Mss, 14.511, f. 108 et seq.

¹⁹² AGR, CC, 2.357, f. 107.

¹⁹³ AGR, CR, 2.784.

limited number of combatants. In the alliance between Liège and Brabant (1287), it was a matter of only 200 to 500 *armures de fer* according to the circumstances.¹⁹⁴ In 1332, John III promised to serve Philip VI at his own expense, for two months of each year, with 200 men-at-arms.¹⁹⁵ In 1366, Wenceslas and Albert of Bavaria, regent of Hainault and Holland, promised to defend their frontiers reciprocally with 300 men or more if necessary, at the expense of the party in need.¹⁹⁶ In 1377, Wenceslas and William of Guelders promised the participation of two hundred *glaives* to prevent the local lords from attacking the merchants travelling in the region of the Rhine.¹⁹⁷ While in our times these numbers might seem derisory, at that period they were enough to garrison and defend a strategic location or to organise a *chevauchée* and strike an enemy in his own lands.

The urban militias

It is impossible to estimate the size of the communal armies.¹⁹⁸ They do not seem to have had such size and strength as those of Liège or Flanders. According to Gaier, the city of Liège would have disposed of a force of 4,500 men and places such as Huy, Dinant, Saint-Trond or Hasselt would each have possessed a thousand militiamen.¹⁹⁹ For Verbruggen, at Bruges, it was possible to raise more than 7,200 militiamen²⁰⁰ and more than 3,200 at Ghent, even though the powerful trade of the weavers could not take up arms.²⁰¹ We find no such figure in Brabant. Even so, the expenses of the town of Leuven in wartime were impressive:

1355–1356 : 2,630 *florins*
 1356–1357 : 66,682 ½ *florins*
 1357–1358 : 1,735 *florins*
 1358–1359 : 2,410 *florins*²⁰²

A large part of the sum disbursed in 1356–57 must have been devoted to the pay and upkeep of the militia of the town. The other urban accounts that have survived never mention a large force. Only Edmond de Dwynter, when he describes the first siege of Grave, lets us suppose that the troop from Brussels was of great strength, since they alone almost captured the town.²⁰³ In the alliance between the duke of Brabant and the count of Hainault, they each agreed to

¹⁹⁴ VH, pp. 449–51.

¹⁹⁵ Lyon, *From Fief*, pp. 301–4.

¹⁹⁶ Van Mieris, *Groot*, III, p. 188.

¹⁹⁷ Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch*, III, pp. 699–701; Butkens, *Les trophées*, I, preuves, p. 202.

¹⁹⁸ The disappearance of many urban archives and the silence of the narrative sources, which were far more interested in the exploits of the nobility, are the cause here.

¹⁹⁹ Gaier, 'Analysis', pp. 247–8; Gaier, *Art*, pp. 64–5.

²⁰⁰ In the mid-fourteenth century, in Bruges, the basic unit (*voud*), made up of townsmen and members of the trades, was composed of a few more than 600 men. The whole force of Bruges was made up of 12 *vouden*, representing more than 7,200 combatants (De Smet, 'Les effectifs', pp. 868–70; Verbruggen, *Het Gemeenteleger*, pp. 10–80).

²⁰¹ Verbruggen, *The Art*, p. 167.

²⁰² Van Uytven, *Stadsfinanciën*, pp. 255 et seq.

²⁰³ DD, III, pp. 113–14.

gather 8,000 foot soldiers (12 April 1357).²⁰⁴ We must take issue with this last figure. This leaves us to suppose that they could have been raised in large numbers if necessary. Mattheessens holds that the part of the population of the duchy fit to bear arms amounted to between 6,405 and 7,630 persons.²⁰⁵ This is plausible but unverifiable since we still cannot estimate the military strength of the two great towns of the duchy, Brussels and Leuven. Let us note that Maastricht, a major town, was able to raise only 500 militiamen at the end of the fourteenth century.²⁰⁶

How are we to explain this great difference between Brabant and the neighbouring principalities? According to Zylbergeld, this must be attributed to the immaturity of the democratic movement in the towns of Brabant, the trades arriving late and slowly to a share of communal government. For van Uytven, it was a demographic difference in favour of the Flemish towns that explains their superiority. He estimates that in 1374 the population of Brussels was 19,000, that of Leuven 17,000 and that of Malines 13,000.²⁰⁷ These two authors make good points, but I believe that the rebellious spirit of the great Flemish towns is another factor that should not be forgotten. In Brabant, apart from Leuven under Wenceslas and Brussels under John IV, there was no urban revolt. What is more, these two episodes were not at all on the same scale as the frequent rebellions of Bruges and Ghent. These periods of disturbance were catalytic and important reforms were often decided then. This was the case for Leuven after the struggle that opposed the Colneren and the Blankarden in 1267, then between 1360–64 under the rule of Peter Couterel, and for Brussels in 1421–23 during the grave disagreement between the town and John IV. These events, in comparison with Flanders, were too rare to have a real impact. Also Leuven, throughout the many social upheavals which troubled its history during the second half of the fourteenth century, never dared to rebel against the duke and confront the army of Wenceslas, which nonetheless came three times to camp before the city. The towns of Brabant, never having directly opposed the duke, had never needed a powerful army to defend their autonomy. Furthermore they had never had occasion to win the striking victories that would have reinforced their morale. In 1372–74, when civil war was ready to break out in the duchy, it was the duke who resorted to arms, while the towns, by contrast, preferred to negotiate.

Conclusions

In Flanders, after the failure of the men-at-arms against the French royal troops at the end of the thirteenth century and the astonishing victory of the infantry at Courtrai in 1302, the count preferred to call on the urban militias. In the course of the fourteenth century, the number of knights in the Flemish armies remained relatively limited, a few hundred at most, and the majority of them were foreigners. The bulk of the Flemish army was made up of urban militias. The knights who accompanied the count, in limited numbers, would surely have

²⁰⁴ AVL, 246.

²⁰⁵ Mattheessens, 'Het leger', pp. 117–19.

²⁰⁶ De Zantfliet, *Chronicon*, col. 341, 422.

²⁰⁷ Zylbergeld, 'L'initiative', p. 366.

dismounted and fought on foot alongside the townsmen, according to the tactics of the time.²⁰⁸

In Liège, the urban militias were also a major element in the army. At the end of the fourteenth century, while the county of Looz had passed under Liégeois sovereignty, Gaier estimates that the vassals of the bishop amounted to a force of only around 800 knights. In a crisis, the bishop sometimes resorted to foreign men-at-arms whose number could reach up to 3,000. By contrast, the townspeople could furnish, for the whole country, 15,000 foot soldiers. Of course, not all would serve at the same time, and a large force fielded only 5,000 men.²⁰⁹

Balon estimates that the count of Namur must have had more than 10,000 combatants available to him. Unfortunately he remains silent on the sources and the method that allows him to make this estimate. I do not accept this figure because the quoted examples reveal troops of only a few hundred men.²¹⁰

If we compare the strength of the large Brabançon armies with those of neighbouring rulers, we can appreciate the relative power of Brabant. The duke was easily able to raise an army of 2,000 to 3,000 men-at-arms and several thousand militiamen. The strength of the Brabançon army did not lie in its infantry, although the duchy was as urbanised as the principality of Liège or the county of Flanders. The cavalry, by contrast, was much more important there than among these two neighbours. Given the forces that the duke could raise, we can consider that at the end of the fourteenth century Brabant, in proportion, could be considered a strong military power.

²⁰⁸ Verbruggen, *Het leger*, pp. 67–77.

²⁰⁹ Gaier, *Art*, pp. 64–5; Gaier, 'Analysis of military forces in the principality of Liège'.

²¹⁰ Balon, 'L'organisation', pp. 31–40.

General Conclusions

Warfare was, in one way or another, a part of daily life in Brabant in the later fourteenth century. Fortunately for the inhabitants of the duchy, conflicts were often of limited scope in both space and time and their repercussions were mostly of a political and economic nature. This is easily explained. The duchy of Brabant was a far smaller geographical entity than the neighbouring kingdoms. It was therefore far easier for its ruler to establish and maintain his authority. From the thirteenth century onwards the dukes, unlike the kings of France, for example, did not have to undertake long and costly wars against certain of their own recalcitrant vassals. On the other hand, independently of the size of a ruler's domains, the need to secure one's frontiers and the natural desire to increase one's holdings were both causes of conflict. Unfortunately for the duke, the other rulers of the Low Countries were in the same situation. In these conditions, it was very difficult for them to undertake a genuine war of conquest (Proprietary War), and the majority of the conflicts of the era served only to strengthen their positions (Consolidation War). Wars of conquest, if they can be so called, only concerned the seizure of small or middling seigniories, often enclaved within foreign or hostile territory. This situation had an enormous influence on both the strategic decisions and the methods employed by a ruler. Moreover, the human and economic resources of Brabant were scarcely comparable to the strength and wealth of the kingdoms of France and England. With its less ambitious military objectives and its limited resources, warfare in the Low Countries, despite having many points in common with the great military operations of the Hundred Years' War, displays its own peculiar characteristics. It is these characteristics that I have tried to make evident in this work.

The duke and subsequently the duchess were the central figures. They governed the destiny of Brabant and depending on their abilities might raise it to the heights or cast it into the abyss. Wenceslas was a man of war and, like many other rulers of the period, he did not hesitate to risk his own life in the heart of the melee. This attitude, contrary to good sense and to the detriment of the quality of command, was dictated by the knightly mentality of the period. The duke would pay the price for his boldness at Baesweiler. This defeat clearly marks a turning point in the history of the duchy. It tarnished Wenceslas' image so deeply that most historians often forget the successes he had achieved in the early years of his reign. After a difficult beginning (the war of the succession of Brabant), the duke had successfully pursued a policy intended to strengthen Brabant, especially in Limburg and the lands of Outre-Meuse. Wenceslas' capture in 1371 was one of those accidents of history that can utterly alter destinies. Joan was no less courageous than her husband. Although she did not bear arms herself, she never spared herself. She accompanied the army on campaign, remained as close as possible to the theatre of military operations and wished, so far as was possible, to share the life of her soldiers. In the diplomatic sphere, she also succeeded in profiting from the ambition of the duke of Burgundy, transforming Flanders, formerly a deadly enemy, into a reliable ally.

While the duke was at the head of the army, a large number of officers (hereditary or appointed) were charged with carrying out his orders and with sharing the burden of command. However, there was not a rigid hierarchy such as we find in a modern army. The duties of most of these officers do not seem to have been clearly defined. According to the time and the place, different individuals were entrusted with the same missions, and some of them were responsible for a wide variety of tasks. The most important of these officers was the seneschal or the *drossard*. His power reached its peak under the reign of Joan, when he was leader of the army. This is not unconnected to the fact that a woman governed Brabant. The captains of the army seconded him. The marshal of the duke of Brabant dealt mostly with attendance. The *hauts justiciers* were the key element in the administration. They organised the army and handled a large part of the expenses that this entailed. The situation was thus not so chaotic as it might at first appear but here too it was not conducive to efficiency. All these officers were appointed, and none of them apart from the marshal of the duke of Brabant was a professional warrior. I cannot but be startled by this combination of civil and military functions. The luck of nominations could have an enormous impact. This is probably the reason why the captains of the army, and also the marshal of the duke of Brabant, were chosen shortly before the campaign began. This was an opportunity to select the men best able to comprehend the situation and to give them sufficient authority. In the end, although the system was not without its flaws, it has to be recognised that the ducal officers and their staff carried out with a certain efficiency a most weighty task.

Contrary to a common misconception, the duke was not an absolute ruler. The Estates (Nobility, Towns and Clergy) kept watch lest the duke's personal ambitions do harm to the interests of the duchy. The prince and the representatives of the *pays* were not enemies, but they did not always pursue the same goals, above all when a ruler dreamed of glory and conquest while the towns hoped for peace and commercial development. They therefore clashed, sometimes violently, and according to the circumstances, one or other would have to bend the knee. Their power was inversely proportional to the authority of the duke. After the war of the succession of Brabant, Wenceslas had the upper hand, as the towns had to seek his pardon for their submissive attitude to the count of Flanders. However, after the defeat at Baesweiler, the tables were turned and the Estates emerged triumphant. This state of affairs lasted throughout the reign of Joan. The situation would change noticeably with the arrival of Anthony at the head of Brabant. Confident in the support of his powerful family, he did not fear to confront the representatives of the *pays*.¹ Thanks to the oath of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, the Estates had the means to legitimise their demands and their interference was sometimes astonishing. The duke's room for manoeuvre, even where foreign policy and warfare were concerned, was very limited, probably too limited for the duke and his counsellors to plan and direct in the long term a major military operation. The Estates preserved the integrity of the territory, decided on the opening of hostilities, voted for the mobilisation of troops, concluded treaties, negotiated alliances, voted for financial aids, etc. In certain cases they even took a

¹ Boffa, 'L'expédition d'octobre 1407'; Stein, 'Een vergeten crisis. Over een conflict tussen hertog Antoon en de Staten van Brabant in 1407'.

hand in strategic decisions. In none of the other principalities of the Low Countries, not even Flanders, did the representatives of the country enjoy such power. It is however false to claim, as does Avonds, that the duke was unable to carry out any major enterprise without their support.² The *chevauchée* of Jülich, commanded by Wenceslas, or the expedition carried out against Renaud IV in 1407 by Anthony are two counter-examples.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, no standing army existed in Brabant. Feudal military service was effective during brief struggles, conducted over short distances and by small units. Once the needs of the duke increased to the point of going beyond the resources of his fiefs or of affronting feelings tending towards a limitation of the war effort, the provision of a wage was the only means of retaining the interest of his vassals. We can observe in Brabant the changes that also took place elsewhere in the fourteenth century from obligatory service to contractual service, that is from the compulsory to the voluntary. The change was not introduced as a single stroke of policy, but only gradually. Whether in attracting or organising men-at-arms, those responsible in Brabant showed very little imagination. They simply applied the same methods as those used among their neighbours, which had no doubt stood the test of time.

Since warfare was a business practised by a large number of people, the duke was nonetheless easily able, if his finances permitted, to enlist a large number of men. The majority of these were nobles and knights. This group offered several advantages over the other categories of combatant. In comparison to mercenaries, their loyalty was more certain and the duke could rely on them more if his fortunes suffered a reverse. They were professional men-at-arms, whose military competence and morale were much greater than those of the urban militias. Also, their style of combat, mounted and heavily armed, was still the most powerful in the strategy of the time. Furthermore, unlike the urban militias, their participation in ducal expeditions was not dependent on bargaining between the duke and the Estates or the towns. All these explain why, in the fourteenth century, there was no case of a ducal expedition in which I observe their absence.

The organisation of the urban militias was complex and varied according to the time and the place. In general, the local authorities determined it and the duke did not intervene directly in the matter. Most often he was content to confirm the decisions of the magistrate. The political and social history of each town therefore had great influence in this field. The triumph or defeat of a faction often entailed administrative reforms, sometimes radical, from which the military domain was not spared. One of the most important stages in this development, in Brabant as in the neighbouring principalities, was the increasing role played by the trades at the core of the urban militias.

The human potential of the towns of Brabant, like their wealth, was enormous. Unfortunately, it was very difficult for the dukes to take advantage of this. The privileges that they had granted to the cities allowed them, according to the circumstances, to refuse their armed service or their financial help. The towns made good use of these valuable liberties and the dukes often had to bargain for their participa-

² Avonds, *Brabant . . . Land*, p. 229.

tion in his expeditions. For this reason the armies of Brabant were classical armies. A majority of men-at-arms, heavily armed and mounted, formed its principal element. They were supported by the urban militias, which provided foot soldiers and archers. This typicality was peculiar to Brabant, since its two great neighbours, Flanders and Liège, used armies principally composed of urban militiamen.

Armies were not only made up with men-at-arms and militiamen. Many individuals were charged with particular or highly specialised tasks, which were nonetheless indispensable to the proper conduct of military operations. While the sources are particularly reticent as to their role, no doubt because they were not present in the heart of the battle, the importance of their actions must not be underestimated. Without these specialists, it is likely that important military enterprises would have come to nothing.

In a society as religious as that of the Middle Ages, it is unsurprising to see the men of the church taking an active part in preparations for war. Brabant possessed a large number of wealthy abbeys and, during the fourteenth century, the monasteries were obliged to pay their share in the extraordinary aids granted by the Estates. The participation of the church was not only financial. While the clergy did not fight, they were not therefore absent from the battlefield. Within their abilities they helped to raise the morale of the troops by celebrating offices and by actions of charity.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, artillery was a new weapon and still in its infancy. It played no role on the battlefield. What is more, we observe it making its first appearance in siege warfare with very little effect on the progress of military operations. The towns of Brabant seem to have been more interested in the acquisition of artillery than were the duke and duchess. There is probably a simple explanation for this. First of all, cannon were an efficient means to protect the walls of a town. Secondly, the ducal treasury at the time would not stretch to the acquisition of a large train of artillery. It was much simpler for the duke to borrow the pieces owned by the cities of the duchy.

The effectiveness of the Brabançon troops cannot be doubted. If we are left with mixed impression after having reviewed their feats of arms over half a century, it is simply because the diplomats were unable to exploit favourable situations or to minimise the damage in more difficult circumstances. This was a reflection of internecine discord between the overly numerous opposing powers (duke–Estates, nobility–town, patrician–common), each seeking to profit as best it could from events, to the detriment of the national interest.

During the second half of the fourteenth century, the duke was capable of assembling an army sufficiently powerful, sometimes more than 2,500 men, that he could be considered as one of the great rulers of the time. Were it not for the constant need to reach agreement with the Estates, this army would have been a valuable political and diplomatic tool.

The success of an army depended not only on the military qualities of the leaders and the pugnaciousness of the troops, but above all on the ability to organise the recruitment of soldiers, the collection and distribution of victuals, the production of arms and other equipment, the rapid displacements of the troops and the defence of the duchy. As the armies of a middling state such as Brabant amounted to some thousands of men, the logistical requirements necessary to the proper conduct of military operations were such that, should any of these capacities be insufficient, the

expeditions would have ground to a halt. Although the means available at the time were rudimentary, the duke did not encounter too much difficulty in enlisting, lodging and feeding his numerous men-at-arms. The success of this organisation frequently boiled down to a simple question of money. Once again, in all these different tasks, the Brabançons made use of the organisations and procedures of the neighbouring principalities. We find scarcely any original solutions or innovations subsequently copied by their neighbours.

According to some historians, war was the dominant force in creating and moulding the early modern nation-state. This phenomenon can be observed from the Middle Ages onwards, and Perroy has justly written that 'out of their wounds, out of their blood, the modern monarchies [of France and England] were born, and the transition from a feudal society to a state bureaucracy was hastened, since it was imposed by the necessities of war and buttressed by the nationalism that the war itself developed'.³ Even though, in the second half of the fourteenth century, these reforms were still nascent, Brabant was undergoing the same development: the powers of the duke were circumscribed; the representatives of the country participated more and more actively in the destiny of the duchy; the ducal officers, whose role was so important in wartime, saw their offices defined and were placed under closer and closer control by both the duke and the Estates; the financial administration underwent considerable changes, etc. The majority of the great administrative reforms undertaken by the dukes of Brabant of the cadet branch of Burgundy-Valois and their illustrious successors were already in development, and the desire to conduct military operations in a more effective manner played a major role in the dynamics of this change.

³ Perroy, *The Hundred Years*, p. xxviii.

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Glossary

- Amman*: one of the *hauts justiciers*, at the head of the *ammanie* of Brussels.
- Ammanie*: one of the six jurisdictions of Brabant governed by an *amman*.
- Aries*: siege engine.
- Armure de fer*: see *glaive*.
- Arrière-ban*: general levy.
- Bacheleer*: bachelor.
- Baenrotse*: banneret.
- Baetsleer*: bachelor.
- Bail*: a kind of regent.
- Bailli*: one of the *hauts justiciers*, at the head of the *bailliage* of the *Roman Pays de Brabant*.
- Bailliage*: one of the six jurisdictions of Brabant governed by a *bailli*.
- Balista*: siege engine.
- Bancloche*: tocsin.
- Baroen*: baron.
- Bataelge*: see *bataille*.
- Bataille*: battle; the main division of the army.
- Blijde Inkomst*: see *Joyeuse Entrée*.
- Blimeister*: master of the engines.
- Bombarda*: cannon.
- Bosine*: trumpet.
- Breidelwachten*: body guards.
- Burgrave*: castellan.
- Campana cummaniae*: common bell.
- Capitijn*: captain.
- Centenier*: leader of a troop of one hundred men.
- Chambre des Comptes*: literally “Chamber of Account”. Institution concerned with the duke’s finances.
- Chevauchée*: war-ride.
- Chyerurgijn*: surgeon.
- Cloot*: cannonball.
- Cnape*: in Brabant, its general use was very close to that of *knecht*. Otherwise, *cnape* means valet and sometimes squire or noble not dubbed as knights.
- Compagnie* see *Grande compagnie*.
- Conincstavel*: see *connestable*.
- Connestablie*: constabulary, placed under the orders of one or more constables
- Connestabularia*: see *connestablie*.
- Connestable*: constables.
- Connestabularius*: see *connestable*.
- Conroet*: see *conroi*. Some authors use this term in the general sense of “troop”.
- Conroi*: squadron. A small group of cavalry symbolised by a banner and a war cry. It is the basic tactical unit of the medieval army. Its strength being counted as a few tens of soldiers only.
- Corvée*: under the feudal system, compulsory, unpaid labour or duty demanded by a lord.

Course: a military expedition of small importance and of short duration requiring the services of a small number of combatants.

Dapifer: seneschal.

Destrier: warhorse.

Dominus: lord.

Donderbus: cannon.

Donderbusmeester: master of the artillery.

Drossard: appointed seneschal.

Echevins: at the beginning, local representatives of the duke. Later, they will represent the urban authority.

Ecoutète: one of the *hauts justiciers*, at the head of the *mairie* of 's Hertogenbosch.

Ecu: gold coin.

Endenture: indenture, contract.

Escuier: squire.

Estates of Brabant: or the Three Estates of Brabant. Representatives from the towns, the nobility and the church.

Extraordinary aid: aid granted by the Estates of Brabant.

Feudal aids: obligatory aids paid by vassals for the ransom, the marriage or the dubbing of their lord.

Fief-rente: Unlike a classical fief, a fief-rente generally consisted of a sum of money paid regularly by the sovereign to a vassal in exchange for homage, fidelity, military service and other feudal obligations.

Florin: gold coin.

Fosseur: engineer.

Fourrageur: forager.

Franc: gold coin.

Ghemeyne orloghe: common war or public war.

Glaive: combatant possessing two horses.

Glavie: see *glaive*.

Glaviegelt: war tax rise to pay men-at-arms.

Grande compagnie: armies of mercenaries.

Grands justiciers: superior officers (the seneschal, the master of the woods and the *gruyer*).

Gros: silver coin.

Gruyer: or *maître des garennes*, master of hunting.

Guidon: Standard-Bearer.

Harnasch: armour.

Harnaschcamer: Chamber of armour.

Harnaschmeester: master armourer.

Haut justicier: the *hauts justiciers* are the central figures in the administration of the duchy. See *amman*, *bailli*, *écoutète*, *maire* and *margrave*.

Heerschouwing: muster or inspection of arms.

Hoep: see *conroi*.

Hondersteman: see *centenier*.

Hôtel: the Household.

Huusgesinde or *tshertoghen huusgesinde*: the household of the duke.

Joyeuse Entrée: oath that the duke was obliged to swear to on his accession to power.

Kamerlinc: chamberlain.

Knecht: could be any horseman, even a noble, who had not yet been dubbed. *Knecht* is also valet or servant of a man-at-arms, the second member of the *glaive*.

Lance: see *glaive*.

- Landfriede*: association of lords made up to preserve local peace and trade.
Letter of non-prejudice: document that guaranteed that a breaking of privileges did not constitute a precedent which could be subsequently invoked.
Linfar: irregular troop that harass the enemy.
Livre: pound.
Lorica: cuirass.
Maille: silver coin.
Maire: one of the *hauts justiciers*, at the head of the *mairie* of Leuven and the *mairie* of Tirlemont.
Mairie: one of the six jurisdictions of Brabant governed by a *maire* or an *écoutète*.
Maréchalerie: farriery.
Margrave: one of the *hauts justiciers*, at the head of the *marquisat* of the land of Rijen or Herentals.
Marquisat: one of the six jurisdictions of Brabant governed by a *margrave*.
Marscalc: farrier.
Milites: knight.
Ministeriales: a class of unfree knights whose social condition and way of life brought them close to the nobility.
Monstre: muster.
Montre: see *conroi*.
Mouton: gold coin.
Mureur: engineer.
Nobiles: noble.
Orloghe: war.
Orstalle: stable.
Ost: army or an offensive expedition.
Panchier: combatant possessing only one horse.
Pauwelioen: tent.
Pavelioen: tent.
Pax publica: public peace.
Perron: symbol of freedom in Liège and some other city.
Peters: gold coin.
Plaque: silver coin.
Polioretic: siege warfare.
Pond: pound.
Pypenier: piper.
Raad en bede: counsel and aid.
Raet: council.
Raubritter: robber-knight.
Recette générale: general account of the duchy.
Restauratio equorum: reimbursing the losses of horses.
Restor: reimbursing all the losses of horses or of equipment as well as the ransom of unlucky combatants.
Ridder: knight.
Ridderscape: knighthood.
Roman Pays de Brabant: South part of the duchy where French is spoken.
Rotte: used indifferently in both Flemish and in French. See *conroi*.
Route: see *conroi*.
Royal d'or: gold coin.
Ruward: governor.

Scadeboek: book which would serve as reference for the reimbursements of the men-at-arms.

Scaren: see *bataille*.

Schepen: see *échevin*.

Serviens: sergeant.

Son de cloche: the right to sound the tocsin.

Sou: schilling.

Soudier: mercenary.

Spada: sword.

Springal: cannon.

Stad baniere: town's banner.

Swevels: sulphur.

Tentoria: tents.

Trompeneir: trumpeters.

Urpheda: oath of renunciation of revenge.

Varles: valet.

Voetbooge: crossbow.

Wapenscouwing: muster or inspection of arms.

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